

THE FREEDOM CITY WINTER SPECIAL

1989

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**Interviews: Stephen Greif, Sally
Knyvette, Jan Chappell, Steven Pacey
Jacqueline Pearce**

The Freedom City Gazette Winter Special 1989

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Back Cover and Page 23 and Page 27 Photos Courtesy Jacqueline Pearce

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NEWS FROM FREEDOM CITY

It seems rather silly that in mid-March, with only a few weeks of winter left, I should be writing the editorial of our *Winter Special*. Having finished three issues of the *Gazette* in less than two months, I'm rather surprised that we were able to finish this one at all, but we wanted to take the time to make it special. If it makes you feel any better, turn up the air conditioner a notch or two, take some ice cream out of the freezer and put on one of those stupid hats with the tassels on it. On second thought, why don't we just pretend it's still winter, okay? Good -- now take off that ridiculous hat!

Time to get serious again. Looking over the interviews we've gathered for this issue, I'm quite surprised by the span of time we've covered. Our earliest interview was conducted with Jan Chappell back in June of 1987, while our conversation with Jacqueline Pearce is as recent as Gambit several weeks ago.

I'm also very proud of this issue because it boasts several "firsts" for the *Gazette*. We've got an exclusive interview with Stephen Greif, so this is the first time that Travis and Servalan have been reunited, albeit in print, for several years. I hope that's worth the price of admission ...?

Before we get started, I'd like to offer my thanks to some of the people who helped make this issue a truly special one. A tip of the hat to my partner, Mark Modig, who manages to take a big stack of words and pictures and transform them into a wonderful little publication. Thanks also to Zeau Modig, who has the odious task of typing this monster [*My pleasure, dear! -Z.M.*], John Brew and Mike Macomber for their marvelous photographs, and, of course, the five marvelous people who were so gracious with their time: Jan Chappell, Sally Knyvette, Steven Greif, Steven Pacey, and Jacqueline Pearce. Take a bow, folks; you've earned it.

No "News" could be complete without at least one plug, so here it is. Our last regular issue is only a few months away, and I don't think you're going to want to miss it. The eighth issue of the *Gazette* features an exclusive interview with **Blake's 7** director/producer Vere Lorrimer, and will be available for the usual \$2.00 plus \$1.50 p&h. We wanted to finish in style, and we'd very much like you to be with us.

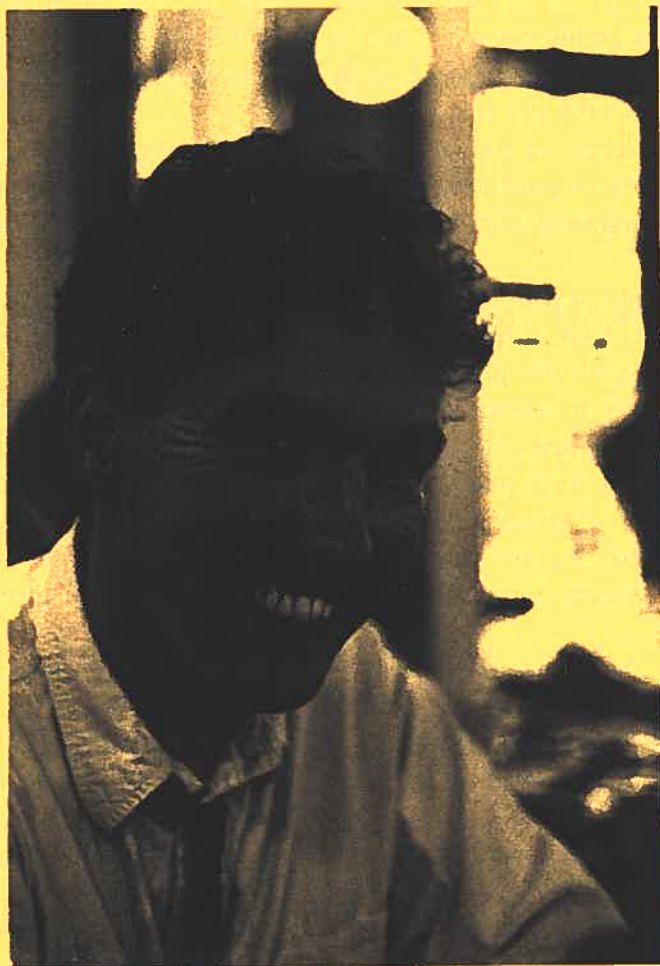
Well, I hope you enjoy our *Winter Special*, folks. Find yourself a comfortable chair, put on some relaxing music, and pour yourself a nice glass of wine. We'll be right back ... as soon as I take off the hat with the stupid tassel. It's getting hot in here!

Regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Joe Nazzaro

Steven Pacey



The Reluctant Sex Symbol of Blake's 7

*by Joe Nazzaro
Photos by John Brew*

[Over the last few years, I've tried to follow two rules in arranging interviews for the Gazette:

Rule #1: Approach the person you'd like to arrange an interview with, either by phone, mail or in person. Be charming, be persuasive, and if at all possible, don't take "no" for an answer.

Rule #2: If Rule #1 fails, get a beautiful blonde to do your dirty work for you.

I had been trying to get an interview with Steven Pacey for some time, but with little success. I met Steven for the first time while he was doing *High Society*, and although he was quite friendly, he politely declined my request for an interview, citing lack of time. As I prepared for my return trip a year later, I hoped to arrange something ahead of time, but my letters met no response. It was time to invoke Rule #2. Enter Sheelagh Wells and her remarkable powers of persuasion. She said she'd see what she could do, and I settled back and waited for an answer. I choose my agents well; Mr. Pacey never knew what hit him.

When I returned to England in 1988, our interview with Steven was arranged between Wednesday performances of his then-current show, *The Admirable Crichton*. Following the matinee, Steven, Sheelagh, my photographer John Brew and I adjourned to a marvelous seafood restaurant near the Haymarket Theatre, where we conducted the interview that follows.

As you'll soon see, Steven is a friendly, down-to-earth kind of person with a wonderfully self-effacing sense of humor. I hope some of that comes through in this interview.

Our thanks to John Brew for the pictures that accompany this interview, and to Sheelagh Wells, my trusty spy and booking agent. Our thanks also to Steven Pacey for taking the time to talk to us and for sharing some of that warmth and friendliness with his American fans.]

Joe Nazzaro: Why don't we start right from the very beginning, and talk about your life as a child star.

Steven Pacey: Alright. When I was three ... [laughter] No, you know I started when I was eleven. What can I tell you? All those fanzines have probably listed them all, and they probably remember them better than I do. I started off in a theatre in North London, and let's skip to the end of the childhood career, which culminated in a production of *The Winslow Boy*, incidentally directed by the same director who's now directing me after all those years. That was *The Winslow Boy*, and I grew to be taller than Kenneth More, which was terribly inconvenient, because he stands up and says, "You're a liar and a thief," and I say, [imitating a small boy] "I'm not, I'm not! I didn't do it!" I was thirteen, and I grew too big, and in the end it looked silly when he stood up, and I was looking down at him, saying "I'm not!" At the end of the run that was it, so I had a couple of school lessons, and eventually went on the road with Godspell.

Joe: How old were you then?

Steven: I was sixteen when I played Jesus in *Godspell*. I was earning a hundred pounds a week, and that was great back then. I was rich, because a hundred pounds was a lot of money fifteen years ago. So [I was making] a hundred quid a week, new-found freedom, I had just left home; I had a ball, and went on for about nine months.

Joe: At that point, you knew where your career was heading?

Steven: Oh yes, I think that was predetermined some years before.

Joe: What sort of opportunities opened up after *Godspell*? I'm sure a role like that must have opened up a few doors for you.

Steven: Well, the funny thing in this business is that it doesn't necessarily follow, actually. Sometimes you're doing an awful lot, and it can suddenly all go blank. It didn't at that time, but nothing really came from *Godspell*. You just go for the next job, and I suppose it helps that you've had that much experience. I did quite a few televisions at that age: seventeen, eighteen. I did an episode of *The Sweeney*; I'm just trying to think of some of the things I was doing then. God, I don't know what I did during those interim years! The next West End play I did was *Leave Him to Heaven*, which was a rock-and-roll musical, and I was about nineteen when I did that. That was a laugh, and I made a lot of great friends in that.

Joe: When you refer to those "interim years," that would indicate that you were going from one certain point to another ...

Steven: That was from sixteen to nineteen, but I can't for the life of me remember what I was doing at the time. I was doing a little radio; I did a hell of a lot of radio. I was asked to join a rep, but I turned it down. I didn't need to do it, because I was doing much better, doing two or three plays in one week sometimes. That was one hell of a lot. I just popped from one studio to another. It was incredible; literally hundreds of radio plays.

Joe: It sounds like you were almost marking time, waiting for something to happen. Was there anything that really set your career going in a definite direction?

Steven: I can't say that there was one big break, because I haven't made it yet, and I'm still waiting for it! You must tell me when it happens, won't you? No, I can't think of any particular landmark in my career that sets it apart from any particular job.

Joe: How did you eventually get involved in *Blake's 7*?

Steven: God knows! I was going to Broadcasting House for an interview with David Maloney, and I remember sitting in the waiting room reading the blurb they sometimes give you about the character just before you go it. They were doing an on camera; sort of a screen test or video test for it, and I was reading this, and I was twenty-one. The character's name was Del Tarrant, and I thought, "That's a silly name. For a start, I can't play anybody named Del!" Anyway, it was obviously short for Dereck [*laughing*]. "I'll call him Derek Tarrant!" But it said that he was thirty-five years old. I thought, "Well, this is stupid. Why am I even bothering with this?" I went down there, looking grittier than ever, saying, "I'm not twenty-one; I'm thirty-five!" and it was an incredibly butch scene, they all were. [*Making a snarling face*] "Avon, Avon ... Tarrant ... Conflict, conflict!"

Sheelagh Wells: Would you do that again?

Steven: I started off using my own normal voice, and David Maloney was saying, "Make it grittier," so [*lower his voice to a harsh whisper*] I'm talking like this, and he said, "Make it even deeper," and I got stuck with that for two years, or whatever it was. Two years with a stupid voice because of that!

Joe: What was it that made them decide to go with somebody who wasn't thirty-five?

Steven: A gritty voice! [*Laughter*] I have no idea; I can't imagine.

Sheelagh: You had charisma.

Steven: Oh yes, charisma. I was loaded with it, and as soon as they ran back that video tape and saw all those teeth, they said, "Yeah, we need a few laughs in this show," and they employed me.

Joe: Did it bother you, joining a show with a set of characters that were already well established?

Steven: You don't really think about it unless you happen to have been a fan. Then it would be sort of daunting to join something if you had already been watching it. You'd say, "How do I fit in there?" but I didn't. It was like it was a new show, really.

Joe: Was there any problem with the rest of the cast, you being one of the new kids on the block, so to speak?

Steven: No. As you know, they were all a terrifically nice bunch, and so there was none of this having to feel one's

way in. There were no hostilities of any kind at all, and that was great. I wasn't on my own, of course, because there was Josette as well.

Joe: Did the two of you wind up sticking together a little more at the beginning?

Steven: Not right at the beginning, funnily enough. Because of her personal life or whatever, she pretty much stayed on her own at the beginning. Since then, and during the series, we became great mates, and are still. We still see a lot of each other socially, but not right at the beginning, no. Josette, in that first week or two, had this annoying habit of always being late, and it drove me up the wall. I can't stand anybody being late for rehearsals, and so, in fact, I was a little bit gritty with her. She's since got a lot better, I'm here to say. It drove me bananas.

Joe: Since the end of *Blake's 7*, you've expressed your frustration several times at what they had given you ...

Steven: I'm sure you've seen the scripts, so you can understand!

Joe: Let's rephrase the question. What sort of frustrations did you feel with the stories, and with what you were given to do?

Steven: They kept rewriting the same scene hundreds of different ways. The conflict with Avon, it gets tedious that way. For a different reason, it didn't get any better when they stopped the conflict with Avon. My character became a bit of a nerd, really, in that he kept falling in love with different guest star women, and always being wrong. From having been occasionally right in the series, and not such an idiot ... I was a little two-dimensional anyway, though. Even *Star Trek* had its limitations. I think *Star Trek* was a great science fiction series, but it's not like doing an ordinary play; there's very much a style of acting involved in that.

Joe: What would you have done to make the character more three-dimensional?

Steven: That's a very difficult question. The whole structure didn't allow for too much to develop. It was an action series first and foremost, and things had to happen, so it was very difficult to get involved in the personalities, the interplay between the characters. It seemed very odd to me that there were two very attractive girls on board the ship, and we didn't even notice them. Were they all gay? I don't know, but it seemed very strange that they passed us by, up and down those corridors, these two gorgeous girls, and we just ignored them.

Joe: And yet your character was going after every girl that moved.



Steven: Quite, so that could have been interesting, some sort of relationship. It could have even caused some more conflict, been fun in every way.

Joe: A lot of fans like to introduce things into the series, which may or may not have been put there by the writers. I'm thinking of the episode *Sand*, which was part of the fourth series, as a good example. Was there an effort by the writer to establish some kind of relationship, or do you think that a lot of that is read into the episode by the fans?

Steven: Well, we were all under the influence of the sand, in fact; that's right, that's why it was called *Sand*. It made us all go funny, and I fell madly in love with Servalan. I think it was the first person you came across, wasn't it? It just happened to be Servalan -- who else could it be? -- skipping across the sand in high heels. No, I don't think so. I don't think it was conscious effort at all. I think it was just different writers who have these fanciful ideas, some of which may have been very useful. That was Tanith Lee. She had some different ideas, but of course it could easily revert back to whatever. You could get one of the past writers coming in, and the audience might think that it's going somewhere in a particular direction, and then ... It's all a very disparate sort of writing.

Joe: I recall your saying that your favorite episode of *Blake's 7* was *Death Watch*, probably for obvious reasons.

Steven: That's right. I grew a moustache, played eight characters in it. *[Laughter]*

Joe: Being a Gemini, I'm sure it was easy to play at least two. How did you go about playing two different characters in that episode?

Steven: Actually, I lost out on that particular episode, in that everybody said they would rather have the brother staying on and Del dying. Everybody preferred him to the character I was playing most of the time. It was a mistake, really; I don't know if it was success or not. I think it was an utter failure, really.



Joe: I'm sure you were happy to see the script, though, and find out that you were actually going to have a more challenging part to play for once.

Steven: It was also, I thought, quite well written. I think that Chris Boucher is a good writer. I thought that it was a nicely written episode, and nicely shot as well. Gerald Blake directed it, and there were some nice shots. That gunfight stuff was pure action, and nothing to do with action really, but there was a lot of nice stuff.

Joe: How did you feel when the final episode of *Blake's 7* was broadcast, and the announcement was made that the series wasn't going to be coming back?

Steven: Well, I sort of knew halfway through the series that I wouldn't be doing another series anyway. It was time for me to move on, so it didn't make a hell of a lot of difference. If they hadn't shot me, I would have shot myself! I'd had enough of it, fun as it was. There's only so far you can go in that sort of thing.

Joe: What did you do after *Blake's 7* was over? Did you want to stay with television, or did you want to go back into the theatre?

Steven: Yes, I certainly fancied doing some stage. Whether I did, I can't quite remember. I had done a thing right before *Blake's 7*; it was a big series I did, playing a German, in a thing called *Cedar Tree*. That was fun, and I worked for about nine months on that. After *Blake's 7*... I certainly wanted to do some theatre after that. In a lot of these interviews, some actors will lie and say, "I thought it was time to do so-and-so," but frankly, I don't think you make a conscious effort to do anything. We've all got agents, we're all as insecure as the next person, and if somebody offers you a good job in whatever medium it is, you'll take it. Anybody who says, "I'm not going to do any more television; I'm only going to do theatre," is lying. They'll do television if it's a nice part. It just depends. Whatever was the next decent part that I wanted to do, I did. Whatever it was; it might have been the theatre. I'm sure I was terrific in it *[laughing]*, but I really can't remember.

Joe: Did you find that playing Tarrant in *Blake's 7* hampered you in any way?

Steven: With women, yes; nobody would speak to me! *[Laughter]* Workwise, it's very difficult to say. There are many things that happen that are beyond your control. An agent puts you up for something, and they say, "Oh no, he does that sort of thing," or "He's got a gritty voice, hasn't he? Sorry, we need someone who's a bit lighter!" No, one's never aware of it ...

Joe: Because you would be oblivious to it right from the start.

Steven: Yes, because you just wouldn't be considered in the first place. That's the only way there have been repercussions.

Joe: Moving into the 1980s, did your career start to head in a specific direction, or did you just bounce from one thing to another?

Steven: Exactly that. Most actors hope that they'll be offered a part that they can show off in; it's as simple as that. Either it's in television, where it will reach a tremendous audience, or some theatre job that's not in the sticks, because if you play Hamlet in Northampton and you're brilliant, it doesn't necessarily advance your career, because nobody's seen it.

Joe: Let's talk about *High Society*, the musical that you were involved in last year. What was it like playing Mike, the character originally played by Jimmy Stewart, and later by Frank Sinatra?

Steven: I loved every minute of that show, I'm here to say. It was great fun, and I really did enjoy it quite a lot. It was a great part.

Joe: How long were you in *High Society*?

Steven: I was in it for six months.

Joe: What do you do to keep yourself fresh when you're playing a role for several months? You mentioned earlier that you've already gotten a little tired of the part you're playing now, and you've only been in the show for a fairly short time.

Steven: In some parts, it's more likely. [In this show] for a start, I have to wait a lot of the time while the island scene is going on before I can get back on stage, and that's frustrating and boring. I hate being in the dressing room; I'm not used to it, because most of the parts that I've played, I've been on stage a lot. I don't like that particularly, but I did it, because I wanted to work with Michael Rudman, which is quite ironic, now that he's no longer working in it. I'm sorry, what was the question?

Joe: What do you do to keep from getting bored with a part that you've been playing for some time?

Steven: If it's good enough, and you're busy enough, there are always a hundred things you could be thinking. Performance-wise, if you were to see six performances in a row, really I can't see much difference between those six performances. There are obviously a myriad of thoughts that one can be thinking, and it will be totally fresh to you for that scene, because you've suddenly thought of this little angle, and, even though it will come out the same, it's the thought processes, and hopefully, that will make it fresh.

Joe: Using the play you're doing now, what do you do to make the part of Lord Brocklehurst more interesting?

Steven: Well, when you have a frig in the room, it's no problem at all. [Laughter] I don't know what I do, actually. I keep thinking of December 3 and getting out. It's really all right when you're doing it. When I say I'm bored, most of the time I'm bored in the dressing room before I go on. When I'm on, my concentration isn't that bad that I'm not there. It's great when you're out there; it's just the rest of it ...

Joe: At this point, are you more interested in staying with the theatre for a while?

Steven: To tell you the truth, I'd love to get a nice television play, or something like that.

Joe: But if you had your choice?

Steven: I wouldn't mind playing Hamlet at the National, if you could speak to a few people. I don't know; anything well-written. There are so many wonderful writers, so anything well-written on any media; it doesn't make any difference. As I said, it's just the right part to show off in, to show your wares. It doesn't matter; it's exciting. Even the prospect of being out of work is exciting, because anything can happen. Hopefully I will be working, but you keep worrying, "What if I can't get a job?" but touch wood, things have been very good. I'd hate to be working in a bank or something, and think that the best I could do was to be bank manager. That would worry me. For a lot of people that might be great, but it's just not for me. There's nothing wrong with a nice nine-to-five job; it would just frighten me. I suppose I like the insecurity of it, and I'm fortunate to be able to do voiceovers, so I'm never actually out of work. I'm always working during the day, which is great.

Joe: I've noticed that you get a lot of people who were fans of *Blake's 7* coming up to you after some of your shows. Do you find that a bit surprising?

Steven: I find it absolutely astonishing. I don't understand it, for the life of me. It was good, and even if you loved something, you find it difficult to understand the imaginations of *Blake's 7* fans, or even science fiction fans. The fans seem peculiar to science fiction rather than to any other kind of show. I've seen shows on TV that I've absolutely adored, and stopped to watch; not many, but some, but there's no way I'd think of them a few years on. I don't understand why people do it, but it's very nice to be remembered.



A Telepath in New York:



PHOTO BY PAT ARMENIA

An Interview with Jan Chappell

Conducted by Joe Nazzaro

[A lot of water has gone under the bridge since this interview was conducted in New York, back in June of 1987. It was Jan Chappell's second American convention, having been to Omnicon in Florida, but her first big city convention, and she was understandably a bit nervous. As for me, it was only my third Blake's 7 interview (after Paul Darrow and Michael Keating), so I was a little nervous myself. If this conversation seems a bit sketchy, please chalk it up to the circumstances.]

Looking back at this interview so many months after it was conducted, it feels a bit strange to read it. Since 1987, I've been lucky enough to bump into Jan a number of times, and on each occasion she was warm and friendly; in sharp contrast to the nervous, chain-smoking woman I met two years ago.

The last time I saw Jan was at Space City in the summer of 1988. She was sitting in a quiet corner of the bar; quiet, that is, until I plopped myself down in one of the overstuffed armchairs beside her. We talked for almost 45 minutes, and we compared notes about American conventions and how much they had changed since those younger, innocent days of a few years past. There were many parts of that weekend that I now choose to forget, but that relaxed, uninterrupted conversation with Jan is one of my happier memories.

I hope you'll enjoy reading this interview with Jan Chappell; maybe it will bring back a few memories when all of you were first introduced to Blake's 7 fandom. Our thanks to Jan Chappell for talking to us those many months ago, and our apologies that this interview took so long to see print.]

Joe Nazzaro: Jan, a lot of people may be familiar with your work on *Blake's 7*, but may not be familiar with some of the other projects you've worked on over the last several years. Let's start from the beginning: when did you first get involved with acting as a possible career?

Jan Chappell: I was about eleven, and going to my secondary school. I was absolutely convinced that I wanted to be a vet, but that only lasted about six months, until I saw a poor little dog with stitches in his side and foot, and thought no, that's the reality. It was shortly after that that I decided to be an actress. I was quite young.

Joe: What did you do to get started as an actress?

Jan: I did things like school plays, and I joined an amateur drama group and a junior drama class, which is the first place I ever met Michael Keating. At the age of thirteen, we were both in a junior drama class together. Neither of us have forgotten that time, and I haven't forgotten Michael's knees. I haven't seen them since, I'd like to add. The next time we met after that was when we worked on *Blake's 7*, although I had noted his name in *The Stage*, and magazines and things like that.

Joe: This interview is off to a great start; talking about Michael Keating's knees.

Jan: Michael, forgive me; you've got great knees!

Joe: So these were all amateur productions at that time?

Jan: Yes, they were. I then left school and applied for drama school, but was turned down. They said I was too young, but I was good enough to come back and not have to pay the audition fee again, so I was somewhat heartened by that. I applied again to RADA and got in there, having worked in the library and having gone to college.

Joe: You thought it was a good idea to get professional instruction?

Jan: Yes I did, and I won the top award when I left RADA. After that, my first job was in a theatre in Guilford, which was a very nice job to kick off with. I then worked at the Royal Court in London, then did rep work around the country. I did quite a lot of classical work; parts like Saint Joan, Desdemona in *Othello*, then started to get small parts in television, usually straight plays.

Joe: Where did your interests start to lean at that time?

Jan: I didn't care what I did, as long as it was interesting, a good script, and had good actors or a good director. I didn't mind what I did; I liked it all, actually.

Joe: When did you break into television?

Jan: During this time, I had the odd part, but nothing that exposed me in the way that *Blake's 7* did, that kind of real popular appear in a series. The producer of *Blake's 7* saw me in a new play I was doing at the Royal Court, which also had David Jackson in it at the time, so David [Maloney] saw David and I in it, and cast us on the strength of the show we were doing at the time.

Joe: Did that save you the trouble of going through the process of getting interviewed and so forth?

Jan: Oh no, we still had a couple of interviews after he had seen us in the play. We had interviews, but we didn't have to take a screen test or anything like that.

Joe: It's very strange how so many of the cast members had met before doing *Blake's 7* together. Paul Darrow had also told the story of meeting you outside David Maloney's office when he went to interview for the part of Avon.



PHOTO BY MARK MODIG

Jan: That's right, I remember that. We were sitting next to each other. Oh, I forgot to mention the Royal Shakespeare Company, which I did before *Blake's 7*, and that was what gave me the opportunity to visit this country, although, in fact, I had visited Arizona with my drama school a few years back. That was real culture shock, to suddenly find

yourself in the middle of a desert with all those cactuses. It was fantastic; I went riding, with those wonderful saddles. I had been riding in England, but not with those saddles that were like armchairs. I used a Smith & Wesson; I had a really good time.

Joe: Another part of the culture shock was probably waiting for all the rain that never came.

Jan: it was January or February, so we had snow and then seventy-five degrees. It was very bizarre; snow in the morning and then at midday it was seventy.

Joe: You haven't really been in America since that time, have you?

Jan: This is my first visit here in about twelve years.

Joe: Getting back to *Blake's 7*, you started to say that was your first major role on television.

Jan: It was certainly the first time that I received such personal attention and was recognized on the streets; none of that had ever happened before.

Joe: Terry Nation had said that some of the characters in the series were fairly undeveloped at the beginning, and took some time to flesh out. What was known about the role of Cally when you started to play her?

Jan: The first episode I appeared in was pretty much the way the character was described to me then, but it did change, as we all know.

Joe: Was a lot of that due to your input?

Jan: No. As I've said before in an interview, I think I was kind of ignorant in many ways about the potential power one might have in a series, that I could have made my feelings known at the beginning of the second series and said, "I'd like to have my character developed more this way," or go back to the character's original conception; I wish I'd said that now. One was trained to serve scripts as they existed, not trained to approach a television series or a television script. You were trained to look at your Bernard Shaw or your Shakespeare and serve that text as well as you could. It wouldn't occur to you to say, "Couldn't we change that line here?" or "I don't like the way that Desdemona is developing." It just didn't occur to you, so in a way it was a kind of conditioning that you served the script as it was. It was very difficult when the scripts went off beam or your character, as you'd conceived it and had been playing it, suddenly reacted in a way that wasn't typical. It was hard to justify that, or any lines where you'd think, "Cally wouldn't say it like that," and you'd have to offer your alternative, which we did, but that was on the details, not the general direction.

Joe: What was the character like, as she had originally described to you?

Jan: She was very much the rebel, a rather impetuous rebel character, which eventually became the philosopher, almost the rationalizing, stabilizing character, which she certainly hadn't originally been presented as, wouldn't you agree?

Joe: Were there aspects of that character that you wanted to change?

Jan: I wish the character was kept on the same tact as it was on the first series. I like the idea of the rebel being younger, of having that youthful energy and impetuosity, but at the same time that area of her being alone which was emphasized.

Joe: Did you really think of the character as being impetuous? Cally always struck me as a character that was more logical and thought out.

Jan: That's how it was developed, but I liked the way the character was earlier.

Joe: Since this was your first big television series, did it help having a cast that was as closely knit as it was on *Blake's 7*?

Jan: It was important, especially under the pressures of the first series, which were great, especially for those of us who had never done a series before. It was very important when sustaining a series for a number of months to get along with those people. It was also important to have a sense of humor, which fortunately those people did, so that made it fun.

Joe: How did you feel when you were asked to return for a second series?

Jan: The second series was already spoken for. They already had the option on us for the second series, so there was no choice. We knew early on in the first series that we would be going again with a second.

Joe: Did any of the cast members express their opinions as to what direction the series should take in the second season, or how their characters could be improved?

Jan: Sally and I were a bit discontented with the second series, because we were left on the *Liberator* too often. We wanted to go out on location more, because it was nice to get away from London for two or three days and get a bit of air in the lungs. It was always better to get away, even if it was just Dorset or Sussex, or even if the weather was bad. You just felt so good being out of doors for a few days. That wasn't the only reason, though. We felt that we were the girls getting left behind to make the tea.

Joe: Do you think that a somewhat sexist attitude?

Jan: We thought it was a bit sexist, Sally and I, and also they were putting us in these skirt things, these very odd costumes. Do you remember that white thing, and all those skirty sort of things?

Joe: Did you find that to be an attempt to feminize your characters a bit more?



PHOTO BY PAT ARMENIA

Jan: Well, initially, I found it to be rather exciting, rather adventurous, imaginative designs, but in conjunction with the fact that we were less physically involved, as it were, it made us resent it a little.

Joe: Did the members of the cast ever discuss the possibility of any romantic involvement with their characters in the series, or is it just something that the fans have talked about?

Jan: I think it was something that was more in the minds of the fans, just having to watch men and women on the screen together. Certainly as far as our little crew was concerned, our attitude was really that we were more brothers and sisters; that's what it felt like. I don't know what Paul and Gareth and Michael thought, but certainly as far as I was concerned ...

Joe: Going into the third season, it seemed there was more of an effort to do something with the character of Cally. Was it a result of any prodding from you?

Jan: I think it was something that just happened; I really can't remember.

Joe: Was it more enjoyable for you, being able to play different roles for a change?

Jan: Yes, it was lovely, because by that time I was starting to feel a little frustrated by the limitations of the character in the series, certainly after the first two series.

Joe: What made you finally decide that you wanted to leave the series after three seasons?

Jan: We had gotten about halfway through series three, and I just started to get very restless, I think. I wanted to get back to roles that made different sorts of demands on me, because I had done a lot of classical work before. I started to get a little envious when I saw things happening at the BBC that I actually would have preferred to be doing. I just got very restless and thought, "Well, there's no way I can do a fourth series." I was just losing my commitment to the series and I wanted a change.

Joe: It seemed like your exit from the series in the fourth season was sort of written "after the fact," with your big death scene taking place off camera.

Jan: No, it had all been written for Cally again, so they just did this "swapover" without building a new character as such.

Joe: Would you have liked getting a big death scene in that episode?

Jan: Oh, they wanted to do that, but when I make a decision I'm fairly uncompromising. I was asked to do three episodes, then one episode, then maybe a scene, and I thought, "No, if I'm not doing it, I'm not doing it," and I was very uncompromising.

Joe: Did you have anything waiting for you after Blake's 7, or were you just sort of casting yourself adrift and seeing what came by?

Jan: Well, between series two and three, I played Lady Macbeth for Roland Joffe, who directed *The Killing Fields* and *The Mission*; in fact, it was the last stage production he ever did. I had done that and it was a terrific experience to play that part, and we had a wonderful designer who came over from Norway, who worked with the production in a way I've never experienced before or since. He actually came to rehearsals for a week, met us, and then went away and designed the costumes, and they were really great costumes. So I did have a sort of taste of going back on stage.

Joe: Getting away from the subject of acting, what do you like to do when you're not working?

Jan: These days, I know it's probably a sign of the years passing, but I actually love my garden. I've got a big garden, and we've got so many trees around us, and so many other gardens, it's really like the country. One day I'll move to the country, I know I will, and I just love that. When I'm in the garden I feel instantly relaxed. In the end, I think that's all it's about really.

Joe: So you enjoy being a lady of leisure sometimes?

Jan: I love large garden clearances. I love attacking those brambles, and I find physical work very, very satisfying. I said to my brother, "You know, I could be quite happy doing that." In fact, I was thinking may I should phone up somebody who does gardening and say, "Look, do you need somebody else to come out and help you?"

Joe: You mentioned your classical upbringing earlier. Do you enjoy reading classics such as Shakespeare, or is that just a result of your work?

Jan: Oh no, I loved it, but I also enjoy comedy. I haven't done enough of that, and people have told me that's really what I am. I did a show in 1976 in one of our prime fringe spots, and it was transferred to television, and then transferred to the West End. That could have been a very good changing point for me, in terms of the theatre, but what happened was we did the show in London, then we took it to Rotterdam and Amsterdam -- we had this little tour set up -- and what happened was that after the Bush Theatre, I had three or four calls from people wanting to see me and I could never get to see them because of all this touring. I had terrific reviews and it was all comedy.

Joe: What was the name of the play?

Jan: *The Everest Hotel*, by Snoo Wilson. It's now in San Francisco, I think. He's done some shows here, off-Broadway.

Joe: What sort of role did you play?

Jan: An absolutely dippy Liverpudlian, in a world of her own, but not like the Cally character. She was absolutely zany, and I loved it.

Joe: That's when you knew you had a taste for comedy?

Jan: No, I knew that before ...

Joe: You just didn't have a chance before.

Jan: I had a couple of gigs before it, I can tell you, but it was fun.

Jan: That's right, and physically, it was a real character role for me.

Joe: I understand that you were conned into it by John Nathan-Turner.

Joe: This is one of your first Blake's 7 conventions in America. Are you a little taken aback by all this?

Jan: I won't say I was "conned" into it; it was just his sort of innate charm that filled one with confidence that it would be all right. He said all we had to do was this, and it couldn't have been simpler, really. We sang, "Keep On Smiling." We both wore Hawaiian shirts, and Gary [Downie] lent me his tuxedo, so we were both dressed up for it. I don't know what I'm going to do at this year's Scorpio, but Sally and I are going to get together with a large bottle of wine to see what we can do.

Jan: It's still rather unreal. In Britain, when it was showing, you had a real sense of the temperature of how popular it was, you just felt it. I have absolutely no sense of that apart from conventions, so it's actually very unreal. I don't know how many people watch Blake's 7, but one was aware of that in Britain. At these conventions, one is rather bewildered by it. The thing about British fans, because they're rather backwards about coming forwards, there's part of you that feels really puzzled. They seem to be more in awe or shyer in that context, whereas American fans don't seem to be, and you don't seem very aware of that.

Joe: Have you enjoyed it so far?

Jan: Well, I must say it was very nice making friends in Florida and being able to meet those friends back here. I'm glad this wasn't my first convention; let's put it like that.

Joe: Do you find it difficult, getting up in front of a large group of people and talking about a series you worked on several years ago?

Jan: I was rather nervous before Florida because I didn't know what people were going to ask. I still don't. I don't know what is going to be expected of me today. Even when we were doing the show, as soon as we finished an episode, it would be like a tape that was being wiped from my mind, and we would go on to the next one. I don't have a very good memory for detail.

Joe: You also did your first cabaret down in Florida.



PHOTO BY PAT ARMENIA

Sally Knyvette



Actress for the '80s

by Joe Nazzaro
Photos by Pat Armenia

[While there are few things more embarrassing than getting lost on the way to an interview, there are few experiences more exciting than getting picked up by Sally Knyvette. Hmmm... I'd better explain that a little bit better, shouldn't I?

I first met Sally during Scorpio V back in 1987, as one of several fans doing a group interview. (That interview with Sally and Jan Chappell was published in *The Freedom City Gazette Fall Special* last year.) To be quite honest, I've always hated group interviews. Because of the large amount of people involved, they are usually rather disjointed, and not very intimate. Anyway, after the interview was over, I explained to Sally that I was going to be coming to England in a month, and would she be interested in doing another, more in-depth interview while I was there? She agreed, giving me the phone number of her agent so that I could get in touch with her.

Several weeks later, I tried to contact Sally through her agent, a frustrating and time-consuming process, I can assure you. For several days, Sally and I played "telephone tag" before I finally managed to reach her. We arranged to meet at her flat on the final day of my visit.

Unfortunately, I have a rather dismal sense of direction and, on my way to Sally's flat, I managed to get myself lost. I wound up in a nearby pub, using a telephone that ate my money with a most disturbing gusto, but was finally able to reach Sally with a cry for help. She immediately agreed to drive out and pick me up and, several minutes later, rescued me from the streets of London. (Now does it make sense?)

As Sally and I sat down to do this interview, I deliberately tried to steer away from the subject of *Blake's 7*, and instead tried to find out a little more about the actress herself. What emerges is a conversation with a strong-willed, outspoken individual, much like... much like Jenna Stannis could have turned out, I suppose.

The Gazette would like to thank Sally for talking to us, and also for taking the time out to rescue this intrepid interviewer. (No doubt I'd still be walking around London looking for that damned street sign!) Ah well, if nothing else, how many American fans can say (at the risk of beating this joke to death) that they were picked up by Sally Knyvette?]

Joe: Let's begin with the most obvious and most used question: how did you get started in acting as a career?

Sally: I got started not meaning to get into the theatre at all. I had been living in France, and I came back to England with two French guys to start a French restaurant, and that we did very successfully; a place called *The Gasworks*. That was about 1970, I guess, and we were doing extremely well, but I suddenly found that I wasn't getting as much out of it as I wanted. I bumped into a friend in the restaurant one night who was acting, and she mentioned that she was having a session of classes with this actress, and I went off to see this woman, took a few classes, and that was it. Then, for a joke, I applied to a company, and was doing kids' theatre; they were doing Oscar Wilde fairy tales in schools and, to my amazement, I got the job as one of the actors travelling around doing these plays for six months. That was my first

official job, and I didn't actually go to drama school at all, because I had been a tremendous rebel up to that point, and, for my parents, that would have been the final nail in the coffin if I had stayed to do that at that time. So, I started acting doing kids' theatre in these shows; four of us travelling around in a van, doing Oscar Wilde fairy tales. I liked the shows, but didn't like the setup. It was a bit rough, for very little money, and very strange people to work with, but I carried on with it, because it would get me my Equity card. I then went back to London and walked into the Royal Court, which is a theatre up the road, and I heard that there was an assistant stage manager job going. I didn't even know what that was; I hadn't even heard what an ASM was, but I walked into the foyer and collared the first guy I see, who happened to be the director (unbeknownst to me), and asked him what being an ASM meant. He explained what the job was, and I said that I had heard that there was an ASM job going, and he said yes, there was. I turned around and said I'd love to have it, and I think he was amazed at my sort of pretentiousness. I didn't at all realize that it was audacious. I was quite young at the time, so he gave me the job, and within three weeks of getting that job they decided to re-audition understudies for the show, because the understudies were very bad. I auditioned, got the part, and within two weeks the woman I was understudying had to go to the hospital, and I suddenly found myself on the West End stage through this series of fortuitous accidents.

Joe: How to succeed without really trying.

Sally: Well, yes, to be honest. So there I was in the middle of this play called *Philanthropist*, by Christopher Hampton. That was a really good break, and, as result of that, I then got a good agent, and went on to do a lot of successful work in reps and other theatres in London. I could go on and list masses of credits, but I think it would bore you stiff.

Joe: Why don't you just talk about a few of your favorite roles during that period?

Sally: I quite enjoyed playing Celia in *The Cocktail Party*, by T.S. Eliot. I loved



Blake's 7 Copyright © BBC

that, and it hit me very powerfully at the time. It was very much where I was coming from in my own head, and, reading the part, I just felt, "Great, this is just what I want to play!" Funnily enough, the director of that theatre had wanted me to play that part for two years, so I felt that I was very tuned into it. We toured it around medieval churches in Suffolk, and that was a wonderful experience; I loved doing that. We also did a medieval mystery play that was done in the same sort of context at Christmas, and that was great, climbing all those hills to the church with flaming torches in these medieval costumes, singing Glorian chants. It was very exciting to do.

Joe: It wasn't actually restricted to the stage, then?

Sally: It was actually a tour comparing theatre and religion, and we took it to the churches throughout the area. It was also done in the theatre in Ipswich, where I was working. I also played Ophelia there, which I loved doing. I played Ophelia both there and on tour in India. It was a very exciting experience. We did six months in India, travel from Calcutta to Bombay ... two weeks in each place, and that was wonderful. The part of Ophelia is very exciting to do, anyway; to explore madness on stage, and a part that's been written by Shakespeare is a fairly exciting thing to do.

Joe: Do you like playing women whose characters are a bit off the beaten path, so to speak?

Sally: Let's say I like doing them. I haven't had enough chance to do them, but the ones I've done have been interesting. I haven't thought about why I chose them, but they have affected me. I suppose I like exploring the other side; I find it quite exciting. That's why I found *Blake's 7* to be so frustrating for me. It was very "un-stretching."

Joe: At what point did you get interested in television?

Sally: I had done a lot of bits and pieces for years. I had done two episodes of *Z Cars*, which was a popular TV thing. It really dates me, but I had a great part in one of those, in which I played a very tough, slightly raunchy stable girl who was doping all the horses, and she was having an affair with the boyfriend of the guy who owned the stables. That was great, because I got to ride those racehorses on Brighton Racecourse with all those professional racers, and that was very exciting. I love sports, particularly riding horses, so it was a part that incorporated some physical activity that I really enjoyed. I did a thing called *Who Pays the Ferryman* ...

Joe: Was that your first part on television?

Sally: One of my first parts, and I was deeply ashamed of it. I don't know if you've seen it. The director thought it was wonderful, and kept encouraging me all the way through, but when I saw it ... I had no idea I had done so much theatre, and saw how much I had to bring it down, and a lot of the parts that I had done before that on television required me to just be natural. This particular part required a lot of emotion, and I didn't realize that you had to internalize it, as opposed to spew it out as you would on stage. I was horrified by it! The recording of the scene which I particularly loathe is the one that David Maloney came up to watch me do to get the part of Jenna, so he must have thought it was good.

Joe: Maybe you were just being overly critical.

Sally: Maybe; I don't know. On screen, it looked dreadful, I thought. They must have watched it on the monitors, but yes, they must have thought something was there. I did another play for television, which I really loved doing. It was the part of a girl who was a pawn between parents who were split up. It was a series of plays about kids who break away from their family, called *Breakaway Girls*. This was about a particular girl whose parents are high flyers in the advertising world who have a lot of problems in their relationship, and they end up using her to avoid facing up to their own problems. That was a very good part, and I think it was the most satisfying thing I've ever done on television. That got me a very good agent at the time, and then I went back into theatre. I didn't pursue television again until *Blake's 7*, which is where I got the most exposure.

Joe: Ironically enough.

Sally: Ironically enough, exactly. I've been a lot happier, I think, with a lot of the work I've done on stage. I haven't really had the chance to work with what I call good television directors yet, and I hope I will have the chance.

Joe: You mean someone who will pull the best out of you?

Sally: Someone who will stretch me. I also think, apart from Sarah, I don't think I've had a chance to work with some really exciting material, and I long to do that. I'd like to work on some good classic material on television, or work with a really good director who really stretches me. Had I had someone who could have really stretched something good out of me in *Blake's 7*, I think I would have been much better, but I didn't know how to cope with a part which was so under-written, and which I was so frustrated with.

Joe: Looking back on *Blake's 7* some six or seven years after you worked on it, how do you feel about the reaction the show is now receiving?

Sally: I'm amazed and surprised; I can't believe it. Not only myself, but I tell people that I've been over in the States for a *Blake's 7* convention, and they just collapse. They can't believe their ears. It's completely incomprehensible to me that it's still so popular. That's not to say that I denigrate it or think it's a bad show; I think there were some very good things in it, but overall, I don't think it was a show that ever realized its potential, or the potential that we were led to believe that it could have. I'm amazed that it's such a cult thing still. Obviously, one of the reasons that it's now so popular in America is the fact that you didn't get it when we did. I still get letters from people all over the world, and it completely fascinates me. It's so extreme, because those that like it are very extreme in their liking of it, but the people who don't like it are equally extreme in how they think it's the most boring thing they've ever seen. It does seem to be a show that generates some intense feeling.

Joe: I've heard you talk about your work in *Blake's 7* several times, and it seems apparent that, even though you enjoyed working with the other cast members, it was a time when you were not feeling very fulfilled.

Sally: No, it wasn't, and I tried to get out after the first year, and was told that they had an



option on us. I instinctively knew, and I was amazed... I had done so much work in the theatre were you did get directed, and I wasn't directed at all on this. I was hardly ever given a decent acting note, a motivation on how I should act. I was really at sea, and you've got to think back that I didn't really have any training. I was very young, and I was learning everything by trial and error, and was therefore in need of good directors, or someone who could give me a way to approach a particular role like this. Had I known how to approach it more, as I know now, I could have made a lot of Jenna, I'm sure, even though it wasn't there. I just didn't know how to do it at the time, to be honest, and I wasn't helped to do it, either. I therefore knew that I was in some way floundering, and that I was being used very much as a sex symbol. I hated that, because I'm not that dumb, actually, and I wished I'd been able to get out earlier, so I could have ... I didn't learn any more in the second year, and it sort of compounded the bad things that I thought were going on. There was one director that I thought understood me, and that was Douggie Camfield; it's very sad that he's now dead. He was great, and I had a number of good chats with him on the shooting of that particular episode, and I learned more from him in that particular episode than I did from anyone else. I also felt that Jenna had a lot of potential, and because I wasn't necessarily realizing it, that they ceased to write for me, and I was given these boring sort of sidekick things. I wanted to get out very quickly and re-educate myself, and find out why it wasn't working.

Joe: How would you have like to have seen Jenna played, looking back now?

Sally: Well, she was an intergalactic space pirate. She didn't know any of those guys before she got onto the ship, but she was a tough entity herself; as tough as Servalan. She could have ... instead of ending up as Blake's sidekick and potential girlfriend, she could have been as much a leader as any of them. She could have been out there like Sigourney Weaver in *Aliens*, making decisions, going down to planets, and making discoveries which Blake and Avon were doing, and dealing with them. You could have had a very interesting situation where ... the women had this sort of petty thing, Cally and I. Why? Because a man wrote it, and they thought girls must automatically loathe each other because there were men around; that's pathetic! We could have had a strong affinity; we could have developed all sorts of exciting things between Cally and I, and Cally, I and the blokes. I was just a sidekick and a clothes horse. Had I been older then, or had I known how to approach these things, I obviously would have done it. I'd love for there to be an episode written now; God, I'd probably get thrown off without getting thrown off. You learn so much through experience. I went off for three years to university, and I think I was very aware that I had no training, and I needed to take time off to focus what I felt were my strong feelings.

Joe: So you also blame yourself for some of the weaknesses that Jenna had then?

Sally: Yes. As with so many things in life, there are a certain combination of factors that lead to a certain thing. I'm glad I was able to get out at the time that I did, because I wasn't coping with it as well as I should have done.

Joe: When you say that you weren't coping with it ...

Sally: Well, I coped with it. I was enjoying it, and coping with it as well as I could, given the setup, but I was instinctively frustrated by it and couldn't make other people write for me well, and couldn't develop the part myself.

Joe: What were you trying to accomplish by going back to school?

Sally: I wanted to go back and study the classics, particularly Shakespeare, which is what I majored in, and to get a lot of groundwork in the sort of plays and the work that I instinctively felt I was interested in. I had studied the history of the theatre from its beginnings onwards, so I wanted to do an academic degree. I didn't want to do a practical degree, because that was where I felt I was lacking more than anything. I felt that in some way my spontaneity as an actress was always there, but what I wanted was more ... acting is all about interpretation, and if you know how to approach a text, particularly the more difficult ones, and you know how to open the doors, it can give an actor an enormous amount in terms of his acting. I basically wanted to do that. I also wanted to do a director's course while I was there, and I did some practical acting and directing while I was there. I also continued to do some television work.

Joe: Just to pay the rent?

Sally: Exactly. Those were tough times, and I ended up my last year doing a thesis on Chekov and directing one of his plays for the director's course. It went extremely well, and it gave me a great feel for directing. I then came back into the marketplace to find that it was very difficult to get work, which was a great shame, because I had never had any problem finding work before. It was a bit of a shock. I felt that I had done something worthwhile, doing three years at university, and, in fact, there I was having to battle for work in a way that I never had to do before. Really, the last three years have been to try and get back onto an even keel, and to get the chance to do the work I now feel very well prepared to do. It hasn't really happened in the way I wanted, but I'm quite sure it will. I've been earning money quite well for the last three years, but none of it has been the work I wanted to do. It's a matter of getting one good chance. The problem for me now is the agent. You've heard a lot of actors moan and groan about their agent; I left an extremely good agent to go to university, and can't go back to him because I had left him.

Joe: They don't allow that sort of thing?

Sally: He wasn't happy that I left, so I ended up coming out of university without an agent, which was difficult. I had been out of the business for three years, plus you're much older; you're not very attractive to agents, suddenly.

Joe: So you're at somewhat of a crossroads now.

Sally: Yes. But in the meantime, I'd like to continue directing. I've directed a film this year, based on a Maupassant short story, as I think you know. That is my first attempt at directing, in terms of making the move from acting to directing, and I'm just going to carry on and do as much as possible. When I was in America, I was collecting new plays. I want, if possible, to do a play for three women; I've got three very good actresses that are not working enough that I'd like to use. If I can get something off the ground in the next month or two, possibly even from an American playwright, and do it in England, that would be great. Basically, someone who is unknown, because it would be easier to get a lot of critics to come if it's a new piece.

Joe: They also won't have any preconceptions about what you're doing.

Sally: Exactly. If you're going to do Hedda Gabler or Twelfth Night, everyone has seen hundreds of productions of those. I've just finished -- if you want to know what I've been doing this year -- I've been on tour for six months, so I've been away. I was doing a pantomime at Christmas, playing Jack in Jack and the Beanstalk, which was great for me, because it was the first time I had done any singing or dancing onstage since Ipswich, which was ten years ago, and I love music. Music is one of my great loves, and to actually get out there with a microphone and sing and dance was a dream for me, and I really enjoyed it. It was a pantomime, which is not quite like being in a rock opera, but, even so, it was good fun. After that, I carried on working for the same director in a tour of a new play, which is what they call a "West End tryout," to see if the play is good enough to go into the West End, and, in fact, it wasn't. The second act was very good, but the first act was absolutely dreadful. The playwright kept coming on tour with us, trying to rewrite it, but he couldn't get the first act right. The plays have been put on ice now, and the playwright is rewriting the first act, and it may go in after Christmas; we don't know yet.

Joe: Do you go back and try it out all over again?

Sally: I might; I don't know yet. Much of it depends on what my involvements were. I wouldn't make any commitments to do that now. It would have to be a very good first act to excite me to want to do it. We did ninety-eight performances of it, and, by the end, we were all screaming up the walls. I am at a crossroads now. Basically, if some good work comes up, it will be very exciting, but if it doesn't, then I've got to make it happen, in terms of either the directing -- get a good new play and go out and do it myself ... I think every actor has

these periods; I don't think it's anything new. I could sit here and say, "It's been wonderful, darling! I've been doing all these wonderful, exciting things," but no, I've got to be honest about what I've been doing, and hope that some really exciting things come up. Actors are pawns. If you've been very successful, you can call the shots and choose what you want to do. I was reading an interview with Harrison Ford, who was in a desperate state and ready to go back to woodwork, and not getting anything, and suddenly one thing can tip the balance.

Joe: So you're saying that the best is still to come, then?

Sally: It had better be! If it isn't, I shall go out and become a gardener!



Good Guys Do Wear Black:

An Interview with Stephen Greif

Interview conducted by Joe Nazzaro

Photos by John Brew

[I'm very happy to bring you this interview: a rare conversation with the elusive Stephen Greif. To the best of my knowledge, this is only the second interview Stephen has given the fans over the last several years, and I'm delighted that we're able to bring it to you here in the Gazette.

I first tried to contact Stephen back in 1987 and received a cordial reply, which also pointed out the fact that I had misspelled his name! (That's what I get for writing letters at 3:00 a.m., I suppose.) Unfortunately, I was not able to contact Stephen while I was in London, and eventually my time ran out.

Last fall, I wrote to Stephen again, bringing up the possibility of an interview, and again received a reply. This time, I made that appointment one of my first priorities and called Stephen's agent first thing on Monday morning. That evening, I was in my hotel room, getting ready to go out for dinner. I was just walking out the door when the phone rang. A strangely familiar voice on the other end said, "This is Stephen Greif ...". To my delight, Stephen not only agreed to an interview the next day, but even offered to meet us near our hotel in Hyde Park! Eighteen hours later, John Brew and I were sitting in the lounge of the Royal Lancaster Hotel, drinking coffee with one of Britain's greatest villains.

We're delighted to bring you this rare exclusive with Stephen Greif, and hope that you enjoy it. Our thanks to John Brew for taking the photographs that accompany this interview, and to Stephen Greif (hopefully spelled correctly this time around) for going well out of his way to talk to us. As villains go, he's one hell of a nice guy.]

Joe Nazzaro: Like many actors in Britain, you began your training at RADA, didn't you?

Stephen Greif: Yes, I did. Gareth [Thomas] was at RADA the same time as I was. He was a few terms ahead; in fact, Gareth introduced all us newcomers when we were at RADA. I reminded him of this, because we've just finished working together on something. That was '65, and I had a good time there; I enjoyed it ...

Joe: When you left RADA, what area of acting did you want to pursue?

Stephen: Classical theatre. I was very lucky, and won most of the prizes that year, and I was awarded two by John Gielgud, who came and judged and awarded the prizes. He said some nice things, and I thought it would be a good idea to go to the RSC, and so I got into the RSC as did Gareth; we both went at the same time. I was with them for about a year to eighteen months, and toured America. We did a year in Stratford, then about four months in America, touring Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit. We then came back and they asked me to stay on, but I didn't want to do that. I didn't like the level I was on. I came in slightly above the ground level, if you will, but I didn't think that level was good enough, so that was the end of that. In fact, I have a slight regret about that, because I was also offered the Birmingham Rep, which was the most famous rep in the entire country at that time, but because I was a little young and arrogant, and I had won all these prizes, I thought it would be better to go to Stratford, to play some small parts and understudy leading roles. I understudied Alan Howard, who was playing all the leads, that sort of thing. I thought I'd rather do that than stage-manage for six months, and sweep up, which would have been much much better for me to have done. I would then have graduated to bigger roles much quicker than I did. I takes an awful long time to get to play big roles in the RSC, in those days anyway. I don't know what it's like now.

Joe: So you now regret taking that step?

Stephen: That was a regret, definitely.

Joe: So where did you go, after leaving the RSC?

Stephen: I had done five or six Shakespeare plays and I decided that I wanted to do more. There were three companies at the time: the Prospect Theatre Company, the National and the RSC, and I went to the Prospect Theatre Company, playing two rather nice parts in two very celebrated productions: *Richard II* and *Edward II*. We went to the Edinburgh Festival with them, we televised both of them, and they were a great success. It was a very happy time. We toured the country, we went abroad, and it was a terrific job for about nine months. Then I decided that I wanted to go to the National, so I got in there, but was not offered the roles that I wanted. I was offered understudy parts for Robert Stevens and people like that. I didn't want that, so I went off and did rep for a year. I played a few leading roles in rep, and then the National Theatre called me back.

Joe: That was after you had been gone for a while?

Stephen: I hadn't been there. I hadn't joined in the first place, but they called me back a year later to audition, this time to take over for Tom Baker, an actor who was playing very good roles there, and I got the roles. I stayed with them for eighteen months, had a lovely time, but the next season was not so good and the roles were not so wonderful, but I decided that I would stay anyway, because it was a great company. It was the best company, under the leadership of Olivier; what better is there? There isn't any better.

Joe: So you thought that something that might have been only second best at the National would still be better than the best somewhere else.

Stephen: That's quite right. That was my attitude. I wanted to learn, and there were some terrific directors there - Jonathan Miller, Michael Blakemore - and I was offered ... I did a number of roles, but none of them were particularly satisfactory. Then the third season came and they asked me to stay on, but I decided that I would go, and I remember Larry calling me into his office and asking me if I would reconsider. I said that I would love to, but I simply couldn't, because it wasn't tasty enough, and, all the while, he was pointing at the back of his chair, and his hand was pointing to his Oscar that he had won for *Hamlet*; very crafty, very crafty. Anyway, I didn't relent, I didn't give in, and I left, but a year later he called me back to take over in *Saturday, Sunday and Monday* in the West End, so he didn't forget me. I went back with a warm heart, and had a lovely time in that.

Joe: Basically, the National became your home for some time, didn't it?

Stephen: Yes, it did, off and on. I was very lucky, because I went on with him in *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, which was a singularly wonderful experience, as you can imagine. I was covering Anthony Hopkins as well, so it was a very busy season. Tony got sick and I went on for him, and it was a wonderful experience. I was miscast, though; I was too big, and should have been playing the other brother, but it was still great. Then, when *Saturday, Sunday and Monday* came along, Zeffereilli was directing it, but he had to go back to England - domestic problems - so Larry took over the direction. He's a brilliant director as well as a brilliant actor. I was very lucky.

Joe: You said that this was a learning experience for you. What did you learn as an actor during that period?

Stephen: Just to become more daring. I think it's very easy to become "un-daring" if you're not careful. You can only become daring in the theatre, but you can carry that through into television. You've really got to learn to stretch, and those learning experiences, particularly *Saturday, Sunday, stretched* me enormously. I touched on emotions that I thought I'd covered up, and it was very good to let them out again.

Joe: When you say "daring," do you mean taking a part that you might not seem right for, and show that you can play it, or just adding a different interpretation to the role?

Stephen: Well, yes, you have to be as honest as you can in that part, and not hold back on the honesty or the reality. That can be very painful until you've learned to break through that barrier, and then it's fine. I think it's a painful business, confronting truth; very painful, and most of us would rather not do it. We'd much prefer to hide it in some way or another. So anyway, it was a good learning experience, and I can't honestly say that I've had another experience like it until I did *Death of a Salesman* a few years later at the National.



Joe: You were fairly content doing stage work at that point?

Stephen: Very much so, yes.

Joe: When did you decide to branch into television?

Stephen: I left the National in '73, and then did nonstop television and films for a year, then went back to the National, left there in '75, went off and played Eddie Carbone in *View From the Bridge*, had very good success with that, did more theatre, including a Neil Simon world premiere of *The Gingerbread Lady* with Elaine Stritch, which was a disastrous experience. Elaine, who is a wonderful, daring actress, also had domestic problems at the time, so it wasn't the happiest of productions. [After that] more telly. More telly came along, and I was offered leading roles, one after the other on television, which was very nice. I seemed to fit into a slot which was quite pleasant: playing mysterious international villains. I played a villain in the first of a series of armchair thrillers which were very successful, and then I played a killer called Sinic Morrison, who was a real-life murderer at the turn of the century. It was a two-part special, which was the first of the series. A lot of television came my way, and I was very lucky. I didn't go looking for it; it found me, and I was happy to do it. I was going along the line that I wanted to be going. Then I was doing a comedy series - you don't mind if I do it this way, do you? It makes it easier to remember if I just sort of roll on; like a sort of rolling biography. It saves questions, and I have an easier memory for these things; it's a facility I have. I did a very successful comedy series for the BBC with Robert Lindsey, called *Citizen Smith*. Robert Lindsey disowns that series these days, I have to tell you. He's an ungrateful bastard; it's made him. Anyway, we were doing this, and I was playing the East End owner of a pub, a nice sort of amiable character, not a nasty or heavy character, and Paul Darrow was in the canteen, and he said, "They're looking for this chap in a new science fiction series called *Blake's 7*," and he thought that I should do it. I didn't know anything about it, so we got in touch with the producer, and I went in to see him, and he offered me the part. I thought, "Well, this is a bit funny" - you know, nothing too serious, and a bit spooky. Don't forget, science fiction at that time ... we had Doctor

Who, but by that time *Doctor Who* had become a regular sort of Saturday program, everybody basically knew what it was all about and there weren't any real surprises, except maybe for a change of Doctors once every four years. Blake's 7 had come out at a time when *Star Wars* had just come out, so there was a lot of interest, and it was something rather new. I enjoyed it, and it took off, and it got a rather good audience. I rather enjoyed playing this sort of black-and-white character with the strange patch, who kept trying to catch Blake. We had a lot of fun with it. Gareth and I were friends, and Paul and I became friends, and that was fun, and the rest of the cast were all very nice people. We all got along very well, and it was a good, fun show. I personally couldn't see where it was going to go for me, anyway. I could see where it was going to go for the show, because it had already established itself, and the second series was inevitable, but I couldn't see where I fitted in, because it seemed to me that at the end of every episode, I kept saying, "I'm going to get you, Blake," and that got very boring. I had already said it about five times, and I didn't want to say it anymore; really very predictable. He was a predictable character anyway, we all knew. Sure, the surroundings for each episode might change, but the objectives remained the same.

Joe: But you knew this, going into the series anyway.

Stephen: Well, I didn't know; we weren't all given scripts in advance. We were only given the scripts one by one, so I didn't know what was going to happen. As I got each script, at the end of it was the inevitable "One day I'll get you!" I found that a bit tiresome.

Joe: You were lucky enough, though, to be able to get out of it fairly early. From what I understand, by the time they decided to go ahead with a second season, you were already working on something else.

Stephen: I don't remember that. I remember that they weren't sure - yes, and then they were sure, and then they offered me eight, and then it was going to be ten, and I think that it may have ended up at eleven out of thirteen episodes. I said that I really wasn't sure about it, and I would want to have some discussion about the script to see where the character was going. I felt that I should do that, otherwise it would just become another run-of-the-mill job. I had some meaningful dialogues with the producer of the show, and then a film came up to do with Ian McShane in the south of France, and I wanted to do that very much. I'd had a very big disappointment; I'd broken my Achilles tendon playing squash and it took about four months to get it back together again. It's a horrible thing to have happen to you. I don't know if you know what it is to break an Achilles tendon, but it's really horrible because you have to learn to walk again, basically, and it's very frightening, because you think the damn thing will go again in the physiotherapy. Anyway, I had lost a wonderful series, and I had a very good part in that, which I couldn't do because of the accident. Then this film came up, a very good part, and I thought, "Well, this will compensate for the other thing." I decided to do that, and I told Maloney

that if he could fix the two of them - in other words, if I could do the film *and* the series - I would do it. The film would make the series bearable, providing we could have talks about the script. He couldn't do it. He said he couldn't fill it in. His filming dates clashed with my filming dates in the south of France, and he couldn't do it, so I said, "Bye," and that was the end of that. I went off to Nice to do this film, had a wonderful time, and it went to Number One in the ratings - 20 million people saw it - a phenomenal success, and Blake's 7 went on without me to a second, third and fourth series, as I knew they would.

Joe: You mentioned earlier that you wanted some input on the scripts. Did you have a strong opinion on how your character should be played?

Stephen: To be honest with you, I didn't really have any opinions about what should or shouldn't be. I just wanted to talk it over, so that the inevitable wouldn't happen at the end of every story. I wanted to ensure that the same predictable ending wouldn't occur, but we hadn't even gotten to the stage where I would sit down with Chris Boucher or whoever it was. I don't even know that they would have agreed to it. We just talked about it, but I don't know that anything would have come of it.

Joe: But you would have liked the opportunity.

Stephen: I would have liked the opportunity; in fact, I would have insisted on it, but it never came about, and that was that. I must tell you, though: we had done the pre-filming for episodes twelve and thirteen of that first series, and then I busted my Achilles tendon, so I never got to be in the studio. I only had a very little bit of studio work in twelve and thirteen, so there was a chap that they got ... in episodes twelve and thirteen, there are a number of shots in the studio where you only see me and the girl Jacqueline Pearce from the waist up. From the waist down, it's not me; it's another actor who was walking around a bit flat-footed as me, and then I came in later to dub over the lines. It was rather amusing. You wouldn't realize it, though, unless you knew, because most of that stuff was done on film way back at the beginning of the year, before the accident.

Joe: They wouldn't run credits for somebody else's feet.

Stephen: No, no feet credits.

Joe: You mentioned Jackie Pearce, whom you did a lot of your scenes with in the first season. What was Jackie like to work with?

Stephen: She was fine. She was a very jokey kind of girl, and she played it very jokily. I think both of us could have injected a little more humor into the parts. Possibly, on reflection, we were both a little too serious. I think that could have happened, but we didn't. We both played it a bit black-and-white, and we had a bit of fun. She was a good girl, and I liked her.

Joe: A lot of the cast members have said that it was the family feeling that made the show so enjoyable to work on. Did you find that to be true as well?

Stephen: Yes, I think so. I didn't really mix with all of them. I saw a bit of Paul, because we were sort of film buffs, and I saw Gareth a bit. I didn't see much of Michael Keating or David Jackson or Peter Tuddenham, or Jackie, even. While we were there, though, we got on very well, and we had some nice directors: Douglas Camfield, a very good director, who has since died, Michael Briant, Vere Lorrimer; they were all nice people, and pleasant to work with.

Joe: Which director did you particularly enjoy working with?

Stephen: I enjoyed working with Doug Camfield. He let me choose a few shots, and he filmed them while we were out on location doing an episode; the one where I had the fight with Gareth on some strange planet. It all goes back a bit, but we all got on very well, and I suggested a few shots, which he shot, and I was very flattered that he would do that. He included you, and I enjoyed working with Doug. I had hoped that we could work with each other again, but he died shortly after, so it wasn't to be. They were all good people to work with. It was just another regular series that had to go on, and if a bit more money was spent on it, it would have been better, but in the long run it didn't matter. It was still very popular.

Joe: You said that before *Blake's 7* came along, you had already established yourself as the shadowy, villainous type. Did your portrayal of Travis present a problem for you later on, or had you established yourself enough that it didn't really matter?

Stephen: The fact of the matter is that I've always been given villainous parts, and I always will be given villainous parts; there's no way around it. If you were an actor, you'd be given villainous parts, too, because you're dark, slightly swarthy, which is what I am, and there's no time really for anything else. People are instantly cast, but, curiously, I am cast in a quite different way when I work for Americans. I did a thing called *Ellis Island* in which I played Jesse Lasky, a very pleasant guy. There was nothing villainous about him. I've just come back from Africa, doing a *Movie of the Week* for U.S. network television, playing a foundation that lends money to Elizabeth Montgomery; a very pleasant, amiable character. The character I played in *She Devil* - well, he wasn't an American, but he wasn't a villainous type. A lot of people thought that he was, actually, for some reason; I don't know why they thought that. He was just a plastic surgeon, for God's sake, but they thought he was some strange character; I can't think why. Some woman comes in and wants to be transformed and pays enough money; you do it. What's so bad about that? It doesn't make him a villain.

Joe: You don't seem particularly dismayed at the prospect of constantly playing villains.

Stephen: I was exceedingly dismayed for a long time, and I turned down over a hundred television roles, including some seven or eight series, in which I was asked to play villains or continental heavies or whatever. I turned down a great deal of work. I suddenly realized that at the end of the day, that was what I was going to be asked to play, so why fight it? It was either get out of the business, or earn a living doing what people asked you to do. There's no point in fighting it.

Joe: So once you came to grips with it, it wasn't a problem.

Stephen: No. Sometimes it can be a problem, because a script will come though and you think, "No, this is no good, I don't want to do this," or another villain will come through and you think, "Well, nice location, plenty of money, nice costumes which you might get to buy at the end of it. Why not?" I can do that. If it's really meaningless,

and there are none of the other perks, why bother? I've been very lucky that I've been doing voice-overs for ten years. It's very quiet, by the way, but I've been doing them for ten years, and that was why I was able to turn down all that work for all those years. A hundred television parts; that's a lot of work to turn down. I think I made a mistake. I turned down too many, but you've got to learn. It's a learning process.

Joe: After you left *Blake's 7*, they brought in Brian Croucher to play the part of Travis. Did you ever see any of Brian's episodes?

Stephen: I fleetingly think I saw one of them. I'd be lying if I said - any actor would be lying if he said he didn't take a sneak preview of what the other actor was doing. You do, you want to take a look at what he's doing. I think that, given the restrictions Brian was under, it was okay. I just felt that it was an impossible task to ask somebody to duplicate the role. Why not just kill the character and bring in somebody else? Or why not say that Travis had undergone plastic surgery and was no longer called Travis? He was called ... Shmavis, I don't know, anything you like, Smith, Jones; just don't duplicate the character, because it's deeply unfair on the actor. They even had him wearing an eyepatch as well! Not fair to Brian. I believe he was a success, and that's pleasing, because he's a nice guy, Brian. It was a difficult set of circumstances to work under.

Joe: Did the two of you ever come close to talking about the part together?

Stephen: No. I had no desire to talk to him about it, and I'm sure he didn't want to talk to me about it. It would be deeply embarrassing for both of us.

Joe: You talked about the movie you did after leaving *Blake's 7*. What else did you get involved with?

Stephen: I went to the National to do *Death of a Salesman*, which is something I wanted to do forever. I always wanted to play Biff, and I heard they were doing it, so I went to see them and they gave me Biff. I had a marvelous time doing it, and it was a great experience. It was a super production, very well acted, very well directed by Michael Rudman, who's an American director, and we all did very nicely out of it. We were all nominated for awards, some of us won; I didn't, but others of us did, and it was great. It was a wonderful time. That was the end of that period for me, because my life then changed. I got married, I had children, I took on a mortgage, and I went around the corner and led a different life. My career took a back seat, and my life took a front seat. I'm very glad it worked out that way, I really am. It's all right so far.

Joe: You started talking earlier about *Life and Loves of a She-Devil* earlier, and you mentioned a few of your feelings on the part you played. How did you get involved in that project?

Stephen: I heard that Philip Saville, who was a director I had worked with before, was doing this play, and I think he's a fine director. I didn't know anything about the book, so I read it, and there was only one part for me, and that was Ghengis. I wrote to Philip saying that I wanted to do it, and he offered it to me. The reason that I wanted to do it was because I thought that he was a kind of oddball, weird, laid-back Californian character, very adept at his job, who had before him the most extraordinary challenge that any man could have: to transform one human being into another. It was the Frankenstein thing, but I didn't want to be too serious with it. Philip wanted him played very loose and laid back; women love him, and all that. I didn't want that to be too obvious. I just wanted to play him as an oddball character, a bit like Carl Sagan, and I rather liked that idea.

We came to some sort on that, but people thought that he was some sort of weird, villainous character. I still can't see what was so villainous about him.

Joe: You must admit that he was a little bit weird, though.

Stephen: Well look, is a plastic surgeon weird? I don't think plastic surgeons are viewed as weird. Women go in and pay lots of money to be altered: ear jobs, nose jobs, breast transplants or whatever. This woman just went to an extreme. She wanted to be turned into another woman who was more beautiful. I don't know what's so weird about that.

Joe: That was a decision you had to make: playing the character seriously or making him a little bit silly?

Stephen: He was a little bit silly. I didn't want to play him too seriously. I wanted to play him a little bit odd, and lighten him up a bit. I just didn't think there was anything villainous about him, that's all.

Joe: How do you feel about the way the production finally turned out?

Stephen: I liked parts of it. I think I was miscast in certain areas, but overall I think it was done very well. I think it was directed very well, and I thought the girl who played the lead was very good, inasmuch as she was very real.

Joe: You were saying that when you started to raise a family, you began to cut down on your work a little bit. Does that mean that you're a little more selective in the roles that you choose?

Stephen: Not really, not anymore. The work situation is very tough, and it's getting tougher all the time. You'd think that the older you get, it gets more easy, but it doesn't. I wouldn't say I'm as selective as I'd like to be, but that doesn't mean that I would do anything. I just finished this role which was only one scene, but it's a nice scene. I enjoyed doing that, and the director was wonderful: Lou Antonio, a terrific guy to work with.

Joe: What was the name of the movie?

Stephen: *Face to Face*. I've also just finished a series for the BBC called *Chelworth*, in which I play a marine architect, which is a part that I don't normally play. I have a love affair with the leading lady in that, and that was most unusual. I don't usually get to have love affairs with leading ladies. I usually get to kill them or throw them over cliffs, but I don't get to have love affairs with them. That was fun, and I've just done another series with Wendy Craig; a light entertainment series, playing a rather shallow, two-dimensional villain, but I'd been out of work for a great deal of time, and it stopped the rot. I hadn't worked for nine months, and I was very grateful for the opportunity of doing it. I've now done five months of solid work. I've done eight television series, one right after the other, so I've been very lucky. The last five months have been nonstop. I just shot my first commercial in ten years last week, and it's a very funny commercial (we hope!), for one of the High Street banks. It's been busy.

Joe: You seem to be one of those people who thrives on a good deal of work.

Stephen: I do, I love the work. The more, the better, but it doesn't always work out that way, as you know. I've been out of work for four days now. It's terrible!



Joe: Given the choice, what would you rather be doing right now?

Stephen: Playing golf. [Laughter] I love golf; I've been playing this morning, actually. I'm quite hooked by it, actually. I think that golf is the only serious pastime that anybody should have, actually. [Laughter] No, I'd like to go back and do some more theatre, actually. I'd like to go back to the National and do some more work there. Still, it's been more than ten years since I've been there, and it's pot luck, really. Someone may see you, or you may see somebody, doing the right play, and you're there. It's luck.

Joe: You told me earlier how important it was for you to be in *Death of a Salesman*. Are there any other parts that you'd still like to play?

Stephen: Yes. I'd very much like to play Victor in *The Prince*, another Arthur Miller play. It's a very good play, and it would be a very good part for me, but unless they revive that play at the National, I don't think they would do it. Then, why choose me? There are plenty of other people to choose from, but if they do it, I hope that I would be chosen, so we'll see. Miller is a great playwright; the only playwright for me, really, that really gets me going.

Joe: Before we started this interview, you had expressed surprise at the popularity that *Blake's 7* is now enjoying in the United States. You also seemed a little reluctant to talk about it in this interview.

Stephen: I didn't really see the point of it, quite frankly. I was out of it, they had done three more series after the first one, and I just didn't see what relevance it would have. I was out of it, it was over, and I was doing other things. Now I understand that it's gaining popularity over in the States, and people might even invite me over, which means that I would get a free trip over and maybe even get paid for it. It's a matter of a few days, and I might be able to incorporate a little business at the same time. Why not? It's practical, and I'm a fairly pragmatic guy. I've taken a different view about it. If the right convention came along, and it's in the right part of the world, and people want me enough to bring me over for it, and I'm available ... hell, why not?

Jacqueline Pearce



PHOTO COURTESY CARYN DUNKEL

Portrait of a Survivor

Conducted by Joe Nazzaro

[After having tried to arrange an interview with Jacqueline Pearce for almost two years, it seems strangely ironic that I should finally meet her here in New Jersey, of all places. Like most of the attendees at Gambit, I was surprised and delighted to hear that Jackie would be coming as one of the guests, and a little bit nervous at finally getting a chance to meet her. Thanks to Jude Wilson, who was handling guest relations for Gambit, I was introduced to Jackie, and, over an excellent bottle of Chardonnay, we sat down to the conversation that follows.]

As you're about to find out, this is a rather special interview. During the course of our conversation, Jackie talks about some of the

events that have shaped her life, many of which are rather painful. You'll also hear how she has been rebuilding that life over the last few years, and where things are headed in the future. I was very moved by this interview, even as I read it over a month later. As Jackie points out, pain and loneliness are common to the human condition, and I have no doubt that a lot of our readers will be able to relate to her story, possibly seeing a little bit of themselves in it.

One final note: A few days before we finished this issue, I received a card from Jackie along with several photos to use with the interview. She also enclosed one of her poems to accompany the interview, a poem which I think you'll find very moving and very special. I'm sure that some of you will wind up reading it a number of times, and for a few, it might bring a tear or two to your eye, just as it did for me.

I'd like to extend my appreciation to Michael Macomber for the marvelous photographs that accompany this interview, and to the folks at Gambit, particularly Jude Wilson, who were able to smooth things out for me. Finally, on behalf of our readers, I'd like to thank Jacqueline Pearce for sharing so much of herself with us, and to wish her nothing but peace and happiness in the future. I can't think of anybody who deserves it more.]

Joe Nazzaro: I'd like to start off this interview by talking about style. I've noticed that you have a very definite sense of style, not only in the clothes you wear, but in the way you carry yourself and the manner in which you communicate with other people. Does this come naturally to you, or is it something that you have to work at?

Jacqueline Pearce: You mean, is it something I do deliberately? No, it's not. I do seem to have my own style, and I always have. I have no interest in fashion whatsoever. I've always gone my own way, and I've reached an age where I think I know what suits me, and I stick with that. I live with someone who's fifteen years younger than me who works in fashion, and he's sometimes ashamed to introduce me to his friends! *[Laughter]* But no, it's not something I do deliberately. Clothes don't really interest me except when I'm working; when I'm not working, I spend my life like I am now, in a dressing gown. I like to be comfortable, so no, Joe, I don't really.

Joe: You seem to have an affinity for things from the early 1900s; is that a period you have a special interest in?

Jacqueline: Yes, I do. I like the late Victorian, Edwardian; my home is almost completely Victorian. I'm much happier in that century. I've never been completely comfortable in this one, no.

Joe: So you think you might be happier, having been born some time earlier?

Jacqueline: Yes, I do; in Russia.



PHOTO COURTESY JACQUELINE PEARCE

Joe: Do you subscribe to the notion that people may have had other identities in previous lives?

Jacqueline: Reincarnation? It's one of my interests, yes. My inner life occupies me far more than my outer life, and it always has.

Joe: What do you consider to be your "inner life?"

Jacqueline: Well, I think we're all here to make a journey, and my inner life is the life I live inside my head. I forget who it was that said, "The life we live inside our head is the only life worth living." I think that can be dangerous, because we're here for a particular reason. When it's wonderful is when the life inside your head matches the life outside your head, and that's happening to me more and more. I'm on a spiritual path, and that concerns me more than anything.

Joe: What is it that you're doing to pursue this path?

Jacqueline: I meditate. I started doing that about eighteen months ago. Most of my life has been spent in some kind of therapy, because I was very damaged as a child. Most of us are, to some degree or another, and that's what we all have in common; the pain of being a human being. Being a damaged child meant that I grew up a damaged adult, and I had to do something about that, or I probably wouldn't have lasted. I was fortunate to have fallen into the hands of a brilliant Jungian psychiatrist, and, over the years, he has changed too, and is now my spiritual teacher. It was he who started me on meditation.

Joe: This was one of the ways you've adopted to further a more spiritual lifestyle?

Jacqueline: Developing one's inner resources. Discovering what

you seek is not out there; it's in here.

Joe: What would you say is the most noticeable change to your lifestyle?

Jacqueline: The most noticeable change, Joe, is that I'm happy, and I never used to be. I was always afraid that I'd die without knowing what happiness meant.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MACOMBER

Joe: That's a long time to go without being happy.

Jacqueline: It was a long time to go, yes it was.

Joe: What did you do to make yourself happy before?

Jacqueline: I pursued it relentlessly. I think I knew intuitively that underneath the pain which was a result of the damage, there was a happy human being. I think that's our natural state, but I think we're forgotten how to be that way, and life is about remembering.

Joe: So what is it that makes you happy now?

Jacqueline: My present relationship, probably. He's absolutely wonderful. He's fifteen years younger than I am; I met him when he was twenty-three and I was thirty-eight, not long after Blake's 7 had finished, and quite soon after I had come out of a mental institute in America. I had absolutely nothing; I had no home, I had no money, I had no work, and I was very close to dying. I was in such a state as that, and I met this young boy who was very bright, very sensitive and very caring, and he knew, he always knew that I would get through, and come out of it with the strength that I now have. He nurtured me and cared for me, and that's what happened. I'm very fortunate.

Joe: Have you gotten to the point where your life is going the way you want it to?

Jacqueline: Yes, I have.

Joe: Where does acting fit into your lifestyle now?

Jacqueline: There was a time after Blake's 7, and during my illness as well, that I realized that my work is very important to me. It's something that I take very seriously, because I think it's a gift and it should be nurtured and respected. Because of what I went through when I had my breakdown, and because I had lost everything in the physical sense, it then became equated with staying alive. If I could work, then I could earn some money, and then I could stay alive. I couldn't work at that time; I was unemployable, totally frustrated, and now that I've come through it, I realize the mistake I'd made was in thinking that I was an actress, and had no other life or identity outside of that. I'm not an actress; I'm a human being who has a talent ...

Joe: Who acts.

Jacqueline: Who acts, absolutely, and other things are becoming important to me, so that it no longer dominates me, and is therefore destructive. It's integrated now.

Joe: Has that changed your acting style, or the way you approach acting now?

Jacqueline: I don't take it so intensely; I think that can be a disadvantage. That's not to say that I don't take it seriously, because I do, but humor is added to it.

Joe: In other words, you don't take it as seriously as you did a few years ago.

Jacqueline: Indeed. It's not the reason that I live. I don't live to act now.

Joe: Do you think that's made you a better actress?

Jacqueline: Yes, I do; it probably has, yes.

Joe: What sort of parts do you look for now? Is there a particular role that you look for now, that you would prefer to play?

Jacqueline: I've always been cast playing strong, hard women, and I'm actually very vulnerable. I'd like to do more work that shows my vulnerable side. I'd like to do more comedy, and I might initiate that myself, because I think I'm going to do a one-woman show, based on my experiences and my poetry.

Joe: It's going to be autobiographical?

Jacqueline: Yes, but I think what I've been through is common to everyone.

Joe: Let's go back a bit, if we can. I would imagine that you were quite a rebellious person when you were young.

Jacqueline: Yes, I was.

Joe: And you were put into a convent school at an early age?

Jacqueline: Yes, when I was four.

Joe: Are there any experiences from that time that have made you a stronger person, or is that a period that you try to forget?

Jacqueline: I loathed it, absolutely loathed it. Convents are probably different these days, but in the '40s and '50s, when I was there, no, it was quite damaging. I was a sensitive child, and I was a bright child, and I think most people who have that combination of sensitivity and intelligence are in for a pretty rough ride if they're in the wrong environment, without people who can help develop them.

Joe: So this was actually a bad influence on you at that time?

Jacqueline: Yes, at that time. I was very fortunate, because I had a lay teacher, not a nun, who taught elocution, and she was a brilliant, wonderful woman. She's dead now, and I miss her to this day. She spotted my potential for drama and she nurtured me and loved me, and was very kind. She was my saving grace.

Joe: At what point in your life did you start to think about acting as a career?

Jacqueline: Well, I initially wanted to be a ballerina; that was and is my first love. I studied ballet, but I was never encouraged, and that could well be because I was destined to become an actress. I've always wanted to be in the theatre; nothing else has ever interested me.

Joe: You went in for formal training at RADA. Was that something you feel was necessary for a career in acting?



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MACOMBER

Jacqueline: Certainly at that time, people thought you went to drama school, and then you became an actress, and I wouldn't have known how to approach it otherwise.

Joe: Were you still a rebel as a young adult, or were you still coming to grips with your personality at that time?

Jacqueline: No, it took me many years to come to grips with my personality. I suppose I was always a rebel, but I didn't realize it, because all I was aware of was how insecure I was. I've always been told that I was a very strong woman, but all I knew about was my vulnerability. Until I was aware of my strength, it was absolutely no good to me. I just wasn't aware of it.

Joe: What sort of skills did you pick up at RADA that are still useful to you today?

Jacqueline: Voice production. I was bad vocally; I had a regional accent, and I used to swallow my vowels. I suppose not a great deal, really. It's just like much of life; you learn from doing it. The rest is technique.

Joe: What area of acting did you get into after leaving RADA?

Jacqueline: Films, mostly. I started off doing films and television, and my career was doing very well. I'd been married for about three years, and then my husband left me.

Joe: How old were you at the time?

Jacqueline: I was twenty-three, and what I did was leave the country, and blew what was then a very promising career. I went to America and studied at the Actors' Studio. I've always been influenced by American actors, and I was very influenced by Brando. I wanted to become a member of the Actors' Studio, and I did, but it completely ruined my career in England. I stayed away for three years, and they had forgotten who I was when I came back. I was ill-equipped to enter the real world, and I had no idea how to work for a career.

Joe: This is after returning to England?

Jacqueline: Yes. I was never really career-oriented. I'm not at all manipulative, and I never knew how to turn a situation to my advantage. I don't think I've changed that much.

Joe: You did a lot of work with Hammer Films early in your career. What was it like, working for Hammer in those days?

Jacqueline: It was wonderful, I really loved them. It was very good training, because they took about five weeks to shoot, I think. I had great fun in them; they were lovely. The studio, which was Bray Studios, which I don't think operates any more, and it was like a real family, which is what all actors are looking for.

Joe: One of the films you did during that period was *The Reptile*, in which you had to spend a great deal of time with your face completely covered by makeup. What sort of challenge did that present to you, having to act while having your features obscured in that fashion?

Jacqueline: It was difficult. I hated that part because I was very claustrophobic in those days, and once that mask was stuck on, any reality with the outside world was greatly diminished.

Joe: Would you ever play a part like that again?

Jacqueline: No, once was enough.

Joe: While you were busy doing films, you also decided to branch into other areas as well, didn't you?

Jacqueline: Yes, I was doing it all at the same time: film and theatre and television.

Joe: Which one did you enjoy the most?

Jacqueline: I've always enjoyed film the most.

Joe: Why is that?

Jacqueline: I like working with one camera, and I like working with one crew over a long period of time. A great camaraderie builds up, particularly if it's a good project.

Joe: As opposed to video ...

Jacqueline: If it's television, then you've got five cameras, you're only in the studio for two days every two weeks, and the crew is different all the time; there's no time to build up a relationship.

Joe: What about the advantages or disadvantages of working on stage?

Jacqueline: On stage ... Actors, by their very nature, are not equipped to do a nine-to-five job, and if you're in the theatre and you're doing a year's run, then you've got a nine-to-five job, you really have.

Joe: Let's talk about Blake's 7 for a little while. When you were on stage yesterday, during the opening ceremonies of the convention, you mentioned that Terry Nation had originally envisioned the character of Servalan as a man. How did you eventually wind up with the part?

Jacqueline: Because they offered it to somebody else, she wasn't free, and they thought of me. I was offered one episode, went in for one episode, and stayed for four years.

Joe: Where had David Maloney seen your work before?

Jacqueline: I think it was Vere Lorrimer. He had seen me in a West End play, and I think he had offered it to the other actress, who could not be more different than me. She wasn't free, and so they thought of me.

Joe: What did they tell you about the character at that time?

Jacqueline: I was working at the English-Speaking Theatre in Vienna, and I remember getting a call from my agent at the box office, and he said, "There's a series starting, and I've never heard of it, called Blake's 7, and it's science fiction. Are you interested?" It started the day I got back, which meant that I got off the plane and went straight into rehearsals.

Joe: How were you planning on approaching this character?

Jacqueline: I have no idea at all. I knew that she was the Supreme Commander. The series was still quite young then, and the character, like a human being, just developed over a period of time.

Joe: I know that a lot of the actors on Blake's 7 tried to establish a subtext for their characters, in order to play them more realistically. Did you find that you have one of these "internal histories" for your character as well?

Jacqueline: It wasn't something I had to do; it happened quite involuntarily.

Joe: What kind of subtext did you come up with?

Jacqueline: As I said to you earlier, often the people who play those sorts of parts are very vulnerable, and often, in life, people who are very tough - everyone says, "My God, they're tough!" - they're not, and I felt that way about Servalan.

Joe: Does that make it harder to play a part like that, or does it make it easier?

Jacqueline: Easier, yes.

Joe: But didn't you have to find part of that character in yourself, in order to form some sort of basis for her?

Jacqueline: There was obviously some sort of embryonic Servalan within me before I started, and she just developed.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MACOMBER



PHOTO COURTESY JACQUELINE PEARCE

I saw her as a character of great wit and wonderful opportunities.

Joe: What sort of wit did you see her having? We're not talking about the kind of wit most people would have.

Jacqueline: No. *[Laughing]* Style, more than wit; she had such style. She was wonderful.

Joe: So we come back to what we started this interview talking about.

Jacqueline: Indeed.

Joe: That was one of the aspects of the character that you feel made her so unforgettable?

Jacqueline: Absolutely.

Joe: How much do you think the costumes and hair style were responsible for the way you played the character? When you put on one of those elaborate outfits, did it make it that much easier for you?

Jacqueline: Yes, it always does. Once you've got the makeup on, and the frock, then you know who you are.

Joe: You used to work quite closely with some of the costume designers on the series, in terms of the costumes that Servalan would wear. What sort of input did you have in that area?

Jacqueline: Well, as I said yesterday, when I started, the BBC thought the Supreme Commander should be wearing jackboots, a safari suit and a helmet. I said no, because with this haircut, if you do that, then you might as well cast a man. I also thought that, dramatically, it would be interesting to

have a woman who looked one way and acted another. You didn't know what she was going to do, and that made her dangerous.

Joe: You were saying earlier that the chemistry is different working on a television series, as opposed to a film. What sort of chemistry did you find to exist on Blake's 7?

Jacqueline: Working with the other actors was wonderful; we had no problems at all. We always got on together, and we always worked very well. It was when you brought the crew in that you didn't have the same camaraderie, because they hadn't been together for so long. With the actors, there was no problem.

Joe: Your character proved to be popular enough to warrant her return a number of times throughout the series. What sort of dimensions did you have to bring to Servalan's character in order to make her interesting each time she returned?

Jacqueline: Nothing I did consciously. I think just by her physical appearance that people found her very interesting. Women wanted to be like her, and, to men, she was either a challenge, because they wanted to dominate her, or she was somebody that they wanted to bring home so that she would dominate them. [Laughter]

Joe: Are you saying that the character was more one-dimensional, that it was her physical appearance that made her so appealing?

Jacqueline: No, she wasn't one-dimensional. She had many dimensions, although a lot of writers didn't see that. Terry Nation's script was wonderful, and so was Tanith Lee's, but after that --

Joe: Which directors did you especially enjoy working with at that time?

Jacqueline: Actually, I enjoyed working with Vere. I loved Vere, because Vere lives always in Hollywood in his head, and he shoots as if he was in Hollywood, making a grand movie. Vere loves closeups, and so do I, and I'll never forget - I think it was in one of the Doctor Whos, and I couldn't understand why there was never a closeup. I said to John Nathan-Turner, "Why do you never use closeups?" and he said, "Oh, darling, it's because he shoots it like theatre." I said, "But it's not the theatre, it's television, for God's sake, and a closeup is where it's at."

Joe: Wasn't Vere more of an action director?

Jacqueline: Yes, but he always knew where to point the camera.

Joe: To make the actors and actresses look good?

Jacqueline: Absolutely.

Joe: Do you prefer a director who gives you the motivation for your character, or do you like to just go in and do it on your own?

Jacqueline: If it's a good script, the motivation is there in the writing. If it's not a good script, then you have to find it for yourself.

Joe: Did you find that to be true on Blake's 7?

Jacqueline: Sometimes. You didn't ask too many questions, or you would come up with too many loopholes, so you say it with conviction.

Joe: A lot has been said about the relationships of some of the characters on Blake's 7, such as Avon and Servalan, for example, or even Servalan and Tarrant. Do you think the possible relationships of some of these characters makes them more interesting to the viewers?

Jacqueline: Absolutely. The relationships are where it's at. I don't think there's anything interesting about somebody standing there saying "Standard by ten." It's about relationships. That's what life is about, and that's what makes it interesting.

Joe: Did you try to bring that out in your character?

Jacqueline: Always. Paul and I had developed a relationship for Avon and Servalan.

Joe: What sort of relationship do you think existed between them?

Jacqueline: I felt there was a fascination, a mutual need, and a form of love.

Joe: What sort of mutual need?



TELEPICTURE BY MICHAEL MACOMBER (Blake's 7 © BBC)

Jacqueline: They satisfied something in each other. They were both creatures of high intelligence, and if you're highly intelligent, there aren't that many people to play with. We all need somebody to play with.

Joe: You mentioned Tanith Lee a few minutes ago. What was it about her story, *Sand*, that you enjoyed so much?

Jacqueline: Because Tanith wrote it especially for me. She knew about the relationship I had which almost destroyed me. I had talked to her about it at great length, and she wrote that episode for me, using quite a lot of things that I had said to her. Steven Pacey, who plays Tarrant, who is a dear friend, I remember going into work one day at the BBC, and he came up to me and said, "What are you looking so happy about?" I said, "I moved over the weekend, Stevie; I just moved onto a boat in Chelsea." His face went completely white, and he said, "I live on a boat in Chelsea!" I said, "Stevie, I'm the girl next door," and he said, "If you were the girl next door, I'd move!" I told Tanith that, and she wrote it into the script!



TELEPICTURE BY MICHAEL MACOMBER (Blake's 7 © BBC)

Joe: I understand that you had a marvelous power over Steven Pacey, that you could take a grown man and make him look like a little boy sometimes.

Jacqueline: [Laughing] Who told you that? Apparently, Steven's brother Peter is one of my best friends, and has been for many years, and apparently, according to Pete, Stevie is terrified of me, because he never knows what I'm going to do next! [Laughter]

Joe: So he always had to be on his guard around you!

Jacqueline: Always!

Joe: When you started in *Blake's 7*, you were working with Stephen Greif, who had a similar challenge to yours, in playing a villain. What was Stephen like to work with?

Jacqueline: We got on very well. He and Brian were two totally different kinds of actors. Stephen is a heavy; Brian isn't. They were both different, but there was no problem.

Joe: Did you find it difficult to work with two different actors playing the same part?

Jacqueline: I haven't done that very much. I do think it's unfair, though, asking an actor to do that, playing the same part.

Joe: What would you say that Stephen brought to the character of Travis, as opposed to what Brian gave him?

Jacqueline: I think because Stephen is a heavy and could put the fear of God into people, that was probably what he brought. Brian, to me, is very cuddly, and I think should have been allowed to play Travis in a different way. Because he was taking over for another actor playing the same character with the same name, what could he do?

Joe: Did you feel the character of Servalan worked better alone, or did she need a foil like Travis to work with?

Jacqueline: I think that Servalan was a loner. If there was someone there that she could use, she would, but essentially she was a loner.

Joe: As an actress, I'm sure it was nice to be able to keep coming back week after week, but was it difficult for your character, having her coming back so often?

Jacqueline: No, it wasn't a problem.

Joe: As the series came to an end, a lot of people wondered why Servalan wasn't there in the final episode. We now know that *Blake* wasn't meant to be the last episode, but looking back on it now, are you a little disappointed that you weren't able to be there for the end?

Jacqueline: Absolutely. I've never seen the last episode. I took it very personally that I wasn't included in it, perhaps wrongly. I'm not sure which is the more difficult to deal with: a petty ego or an inflated one, but they've both been problems, and a lot of the men at the BBC found Servalan very threatening, and, because I played her, they found me very threatening as well.

Joe: Which writers did you feel were able to write for your character properly?

Jacqueline: Tanith and Terry; that's about it, really.

Joe: Would you say that Terry was best able to understand Servalan because he had created her?

Jacqueline: And also, if you've got an intelligent writer who will write something ... If you've got a good actor and a good writer, then one will feed the other.

Joe: If somebody came up to you and asked you what your fondest memory of working on *Blake's 7* was, what would it be?

Jacqueline: There's no quick or easy answer to that. She [Servalan] taught me more about myself than anybody else. I said last night, about seven years before *Blake's 7* started, I had gotten into Jungian analysis, so besides doing the show, I was also being analyzed. What the object of this analysis was was to bring me face to face with my own pain, and enable me to confront it and work through it. Because I was with a Jungian analyst, I was working with a lot of archetypes. Servalan was an archetype, so what was happening was that my inner life and my professional life were closely paralleled. I remember at one point understanding what it meant to be a psychopath; I think the dividing line between high integrity and a psychopath is very, very fine, and in my own head, I crossed it. I think if you've been very hurt, there reaches a point where you can be so brutalized by pain that you say, "That's it."



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MACOMBER

happened to me, it was very rare. I never saw my mother again, and in those days, in the rare instances that a marriage broke up, the child went with the mother, and my mother didn't want me. So I was left at a very young age at a huge disadvantage, and that pursued me throughout my life. While I was doing *Blake's 7*, between the second and third series, if you look at me in the second series, the nails weren't on and the makeup was quite subdued. What happened was that I fell in love, and was rejected by the man. Of course, if you're programmed for rejection, you're bound to repeat it. He rejected me, this man that I loved more than life itself, and the rejection catapulted me into facing the pain of betrayal by my mother. It seems that it's only through betrayal that we grow, so I was going through this enormous betrayal and facing my own pain, and that's really what happened to me. During that period of time, I lost my home, my money, my work, my health and my sanity.

Joe: What did you do to start rebuilding your life?

Jacqueline: I came over to America, I finally collapsed, and I wound up in the hospital, where I spent six weeks. That gave me a little space where I did my writing. It was also the most profoundly lonely time in my life. I'm no stranger to loneliness, and I'm sure everybody in the room downstairs is familiar with it. It seems to be part of the human condition; it's terrible. I also think that the loneliness that we suffer is the loneliness of being cut off from ourselves, and really what we're here for is to find ourselves and re-establish contact, and become a whole, integrated human being.

Joe: What sort of writing were you doing at that time?

Jacqueline: I was writing about my feelings at that particular time, and there was absolutely no effort involved at all. I'd just sit down at my typewriter, and it just spewed out of me. It stopped when I left the hospital; after about two or three months, I wrote a little more, and then it just stopped.

Joe: It was really a cathartic process for you?

Jacqueline: It was indeed, absolutely.

Joe: At that time, did you want to go back into acting, or had you started to wonder if maybe you were in the wrong field?

Jacqueline: At that time, I just wanted to stay alive, and the only way I knew to stay alive was to act, because that was the only talent I had. Everything was focused on that, and it became very tunnel-visual. It's only now that I am healed that perhaps I can operate in other areas.

Joe: Other areas such as what?

Joe: Do you think having a background like that made it easier to play a character like Servalan?

Jacqueline: Yes.

Joe: When *Blake's 7* ended, did Servalan come back to haunt you, or did you move on to something else?

Jacqueline: I wound up in a mental home, and I didn't work for fifteen months. In England, it's very different from America. If you are a success commercially in America, then the world's your oyster. If you're a commercial success in England, it means you don't work for a while.

Joe: Would you like to talk about some of the events that led up to this very painful part of your life?

Jacqueline: That led to my breakdown? As briefly as I can, I was abandoned by my mother when I was sixteen months old, and that left me enormously wounded and insecure. It's very common now for that to occur, but in the '40s, when it

Jacqueline: Such as writing. Such as just living. I love people; I'm fascinated by people, and I now have something which I never had before, which is the thing that I value most: I have a trust in life, and I feel that it will take care of me. I will go with the flow, and go wherever it takes me.

Joe: It's nice to have that as a foundation to start with.

Jacqueline: It's wonderful, Joe.

Joe: This is your first science fiction convention in several years. I'm curious what you think about them.

Jacqueline: I find them extraordinary. I was talking about it with Terry [Nation] on the stage just before. I find those people in that audience - to pay that money and to travel all the way across the United States - they move me very much, and we are mutually dependent; they need me and I need them.

Joe: For what reason?

Jacqueline: I need them because they are human beings like I am, and we have to learn from each other.

Joe: Do you find these conventions to be a sort of support system?

Jacqueline: Absolutely, and a shared humanity.

Joe: When you come to a convention like this, what is it that you try to bring to it? I'm stepping out of my role as interviewer here, but you don't strike me as the kind of person who would come all this way just to answer questions about Blake's 7. It seems like there's more to it than that.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MACOMBER

Jacqueline: I just had a very strong feeling that I should come to this convention. I didn't understand why, but the feeling was enough to bring me here.

Joe: Are you glad you came?

Jacqueline: Very glad. I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

Joe: Are you inclined to come to more of these events now, or do you feel that it would dilute your enjoyment of conventions if you came to too many of them?

Jacqueline: Not at all. For me, coming here was actually a celebration, because I seem to have spent a long, long time cut off from life, having to heal, lying in bed, and not being able to do anything, and now I am through it. I would like to share that with as many people as would like to share that with me.

Joe: What is it that you enjoy doing when you're not acting?

Jacqueline: I have a very rich and a very different life when I'm not acting. I have a small circle of very close friends who have been with me for quite some time. I love to go to the country. The country is my greatest love. I love solitude; it's central to my nature, and I seem to be split right down the middle. I'm hugely gregarious and extroverted, yet I'm very introverted and need a lot of privacy.

Joe: How much of yourself remains guarded when you're in public? It seems that the person I've been sitting here talking with for the last hour or so is quite different from the person I saw on stage this weekend.

Jacqueline: I think you've answered your own question. I think it depends on the person you're communicating with. With someone like you, who's wonderful, I can be as open as I can be.

Joe: *[To Mike, who is quietly taking pictures]* You're not hearing any of this, by the way!

Jacqueline: *[Laughing]* It's a two-way street, always.

Joe: There are some guests who come to these conventions who feel that they have to entertain the fans, and try to put on the best show they can. There are also some people who just come as they are, and ask the fans to accept them for themselves. Where do you find yourself falling?

Jacqueline: I would endeavour to be myself whenever possible, because that is honest, and I think people are far more intelligent than they're given credit for a lot of the time.

People can sense when you're not being honest and when you're not being yourself, and there will come a day when they say, "I'm being had!" I think you should always be the best person you can, and always look for the best in other people.

Joe: Where do you see your life going in a few years? We were talking earlier about your spiritual journey; is this a journey that has a specific destination, or is it a means to its own end?

Jacqueline: I think it's a means to its own end. I would like to fulfill my potential as a human being; I think that's what we're all here for. How I'll do that, I don't know. I'm going to take one day at a time, and that's all I can do.

Joe: Are you one of those kind of people who likes to live in the here and now, and do you like to think about the future a lot?

Jacqueline: I've always lived in the past. I lived in the past and I looked to the future for consolation, because the past was unbearable. I'm now at the stage where the present is wonderful, and I'm so grateful.

Joe: So you've managed to shake the past, to some extent?

Jacqueline: Yes, I have. I've come to terms with it.

Joe: I find it hard to believe that you don't have anything in mind for the future. Isn't there something you'd like to be doing a few years from now?

Jacqueline: I want to live in Ireland as quickly as possible. I don't know, Joe, I really don't know. I know that I'm going in the right direction. I am interested as you are, probably much more, to find out what my direction is and what I'm going to wind up doing, but I want more than anything to be true to myself.

Joe: You mentioned the one-woman show you were thinking of doing in the near future. What other sort of writing are you interested in doing?

Jacqueline: I think it's connected with that. Because I've been through the process of analysis, and because I've been through the process of healing, and I think that it's very pertinent right now, and I'm really no different than any human being, in that I've had so much pain, and we all have had pain, and I really want to write about that healing process and what I went through; the extraordinary relationship I had with this wonderful man who analyzed me, and it's those sort of things that I want to write about, that interest me more than anything.

Joe: Is it more important that you share something about yourself, rather than actually creating something new on paper?

Jacqueline: Yes. What I think I'll wind up doing is that I'm going to Orac next week. Terry is only going to be there for one day, so I shall have one day on my own, and I think I will take that opportunity to use my poems, to talk about myself, because that's what people actually want to hear. They don't really want to hear about Blake's 7; they want to hear about the people behind it.

Joe: Most of them know more about Blake's 7 than you do.

Jacqueline: Absolutely! I think what I will do is that I will start in America, because the Americans are so open. They have a wonderful honesty, and I can speak to them in a way that I can't do in England, and I want to start doing that, and perhaps start doing conventions where I can be on my own, speak from my heart, invite questions that come from the heart, and work on my poems.

Joe: Do you feel that this convention is actually a starting point for you?

Jacqueline: Yes, Joe, I do. I think that's why my feelings said to come.

Joe: So we can say this interview is actually a big want-ad, saying "Ask me to come back!"

Jacqueline: Yes, it is.

Joe: Are you looking forward to coming back?

Jacqueline: Very much so.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL MACOMBER

For My Father

Oh God I miss you Daddy
It's more than I can stand
I'm writing this in a mental home
I wish I could hold your hand.

Do you know how much I love you
How much I really care?
I can see you now in Yoevil
Fast asleep in your chair.

Remember when Mummy left us?
I was almost two years old
You put your arms around me
I watched your face grow old.

I think you feel you failed me
But Dad - you never did
All that you had you gave me
You love this dust-bin lid.

I know how much she hurt you
And that is what hurt me
Being too small to help you
When you boiled the milk for me tea.

You went to the pub in the evenings
And every lunch-time as well
I wanted to kill her, Daddy
I knew you were living in hell.

You were my whole world Daddy
I loved every hair on your head
And the stories you told me on Sundays
In the warmth of your great big bed.

About knights and dragons and princes
And Rapunzel who lived in the tower
You taught me the one true essential
That love is the ultimate power.

And that's how I saw you Daddy
A knight on a big white horse
Carrying bottles of lemonade
And ice cream with chocolate sauce.

I'm going to tell you everything Dad
All the thoughts in my head
I may not be with you in Yoevil
But I'll write everyday instead.

I'm feeling much better already
And I know that tonight when I sleep
I shall smile when I think about you
I know I won't have to weep.

Oh gosh! I'm very excited
Writing it down's really fun
'Cos keeping it locked up inside me
Is silly - Son of a gun.

I haven't gone to sleep Dad
I'm sitting up in bed
My music's playing softly
And it's quiet inside my head.

I really love my room here
I'm very much at home
'Cos everybody's mental
So I don't feel so alone.

I think I'll go to sleep now
And perhaps I'll call tomorrow
I'm right to believe in magic Dad
I've found the joy in sorrow.

I *still* can't go to sleep Dad
I'm having too much fun
I'm gonna make lotsa money
And fly you out to the sun.

I want to give you everything
Just like you gave me
So don't you go and die on my Dad
Not now, we're home and free.

I mean it - if you go and die on me Dad
I'll really get pissed off
I want to display you in Hollywood
Mr. Pearce, my Dad, the toff!

It's nine o'clock in the morning
And I've been awake all night
I'm sure you could tell if you saw me
I look like I've been in a fight.

Which of course I have been really
And I *never* had so much fun
I've finally laid those ghosts to rest
Goddamn it Dad - *we won!!!*

--*Jacqueline Pearce*
Las Encinas
May 23, 1982

